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CAMPAIGNS AND THEIR LESSONS

EDITED BY MAJOR-GENERAL SIR C. E. CALLWELL, K.C.B.

THE MARNE CAMPAIGN

BY

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WITH MAPS

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY

First Published . . . 1917
Second Impression . . . 1921

Printed in Great Britain

INTRODUCTION

For years before the outbreak of the European war, a war which had been foreseen by all soldiers who were acquainted with the preparations being made for it in Germany and, to a less extent, elsewhere on the Continent, military experts had been discussing the administrative problems which the handling of the huge armies of the present day must create. It was asserted in some quarters that the staffs concerned would find it impracticable to manœuvre these colossal bodies of men when the issue came to be put to the test, that swift transfers of force over a wide extent of country were no longer feasible, and that the very size of the armies employed must henceforward militate against the development of vertebrate and decisive operations of war. These anticipations were not borne out by the events with which this volume deals. Whatever the experiences of the contending sides may have been subsequent to the contest of the Marne, the course of operations in Belgium and France up to, and including, that memorable struggle, serves to belie the theory that the vast numbers which are placed in the field to-day necessarily forbid the carrying out of strategical combinations hinging on mobility.

If the opposition encountered by the troops be taken into

consideration, that sweep forward from the Rhine Provinces across Brabant and Hainault, across Artois and Picardy almost to the gates of Paris which was accomplished by the German hosts, was especially distinguished by the rapidity of its execution. The outer flank of the invading armies covered a distance of well over 200 miles in less than three weeks, and a nimbleness and vigour manifested themselves in this remarkable advance which calls the lightning thrusts of Napoleon's days to mind. Such an operation could only, it is true, have been carried out by highly organized forces. Nor could such masses of men as took part in it have streamed almost uninterruptedly along numbers of roads and railways, had the control not reposed in thoroughly competent hands. But, be that as it may, the opening phase of the mighty struggle in Western Europe indicates that, in a theatre of war rich in communications, masters of the art can handle great modern armies with a freedom almost equal to that which the victors in the campaigns of Austerlitz and of Gravelotte enjoyed. It may, moreover, be observed, incidentally, that the German rush westwards immediately after the outbreak of hostilities illustrates the importance of rapid mobilization, which seems indeed to have increased as a consequence of the general introduction of universal service.

The fate of Liége and of Maubeuge conveys the impression that, except for delaying purposes within restricted limits, an isolated fortress is, under modern tactical conditions, of little value. On the other hand, Liége and even

Longwy prove that moderately efficient defence-works can sometimes hold up formidable hostile forces until these have succeeded in bringing their heavy ordnance to bear. Trench warfare, which played so big a part in the European war subsequent to the Marne, has given rise to the idea that fortifications can only be overcome by bombardments of the most strenuous kind. But Liége, Namur and Maubeuge were all disposed of easily enough when seriously attacked; and the early downfall of those strongholds probably accounts for the almost precipitate evacuation of their Polish fortresses by the Russians when the hosts of the Central Powers advanced to the Vistula and the Bug in 1915.

The Battle of the Marne furnishes the military student with a signal example of the strategical counter-attack on a great scale. It provides many interesting illustrations of the local tactical counter-attack, no doubt, but Joffre's masterstroke was essentially strategical rather than tactical. It was delivered, or at all events was set in motion, while the contending hosts were not fully in contact, and thus differs widely from the "thunderbolt of Salamanca" when Wellington turned the tables so dramatically on Marshal Marmont. And yet there is no little analogy between the series of protracted combats covering a wide extent of country to which has been given the name of the Marne, and the famous fight when forty thousand men were "defeated in forty minutes." In either case a conqueror owed victory, at least indirectly, to his antagonist having left a yawning gap in his line. In either case the gap

separated a fraction of the whole army from the remainder, and that fraction was disposed on the flank. There were differences, however, which make comparison between the two battles all the more interesting. At Salamanca the comparative isolation of the flank force was brought about by a faulty move made actually under the eyes of the opposing commander, whereas on the Marne the isolation was a result of previous events. At Salamanca Marmont failed to realize the danger to the last and was actually widening the gap when the counter-attack was launched, whereas on the Marne the German higher command was making an effort to close its ranks when General Joffre assumed the offensive. This effort introduced a flank march inwards, whereas when Thomière's detached flank was suddenly assailed by Pakenham at Salamanca he was making a flank march outwards. In either case, those controlling the manœuvres of the side which was counter-attacked were over-confident, ran risks which were not warranted by the situation, and suffered discomfiture in consequence. In either case the issue was decided by the skill with which the victorious commander profited by the mistakes made by the enemy.

There are many matters in connexion with the Campaign of the Marne which remain obscure. The exact movements of certain divisions and corps on certain days have not yet been disclosed, especially on the German side. Some impressions as to the course of events which were formed at the time have already turned out to have been mistaken. It was, for instance, believed, in many quarters both in

France and in this country during the opening months of the contest, that the German objective on the western front was Paris. But there is now no longer much doubt that the real objective of the invaders was the Allied army, and that the design of the Great General Staff of Berlin was to bring that army to battle as speedily as possible and to overthrow it. Again, the French 9th Army has been credited with having, towards the close of the Battle of the Marne, driven a wedge into the heart of the Teutonic forces at their centre, whose defeat has been freely attributed to this reputed thrust delivered by General Foch; but although that army performed priceless services under most difficult conditions and was handled with consummate dexterity by its illustrious chief, it drove no wedge into the enemy's far-flung battle line nor did it execute any movement in the least resembling such a thrust. Another episode with regard to which somewhat incorrect conclusions were arrived at when news first came to hand, was the defence of Liége. The gallant resistance of the Belgian garrison does not appear in reality to have greatly retarded the advance of the bulk of the vast host which was preparing to pour across the Meuse, although it effectively checked the incursion of the enemy's advanced troops. And when the full story of the Campaign of the Marne comes to be written, based on the records of all four belligerents concerned, it is by no means unlikely that ideas still obtaining with regard to other incidents in the operations may have to undergo modification. On one point, however, no later information that may come to hand is likely to alter con-

clusions that have been already formed by impartial commentators.

We know enough about this memorable set of events to realize that the combat of the Marne will rank henceforward as one of the most decisive battles in the annals of mankind. It was not decisive in the sense that Jena and Waterloo were decisive, for the vanquished German forces remained in being and suffered no overwhelming losses in men nor in material. It was not decisive in the sense that Solferino and Sadowa were decisive, for it did not virtually terminate the campaign. But it was decisive in the sense that it completely transformed the strategical situation in the greatest war that the world has seen. There is, moreover, this valuable lesson to be deduced from that victory of the French and British troops in the early days of September, 1914—the triumph of the Allies on the Marne teaches us that the immense numerical strength of military forces such as are nowadays placed in the field by powerful nations, does not forbid skilful tactical combinations on the part of a Great Captain, even if these combinations are exercised by different methods from those in vogue when the commander of an army could watch its every movement from some point of vantage on the battlefield. The early weeks of the European war have made it manifest that there is as ample scope for leadership under the conditions of to-day, as there has been at any previous period of the world's history.

C. E. C.

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CAMPAIGNS AND THEIR LESSONS

THE MARNE CAMPAIGN

CHAPTER I

THE OUTBREAK OF HOSTILITIES—EVENTS UP TO AUGUST 4TH

Maps 1, 3, 4, 2.

Austria declares war on Servia.—To every Foreign Office in Europe that portion of the Continent known by the general title of the Balkans had long been the subject of uneasy speculation. It had gained for itself such appellations as thundercloud, volcano, danger-spot, and magazine, and one fraction of it, Bosnia, was to show that such reputation was not undeserved. That state had been handed over to Austria for administration after the Russo-Turkish War, and in 1908 was definitely annexed, the action of Austria being theatrically supported by Germany in face of the joint protests of England, France, and Russia. Six years later the spark was lit in Bosnia which was to set all Europe in a blaze.

On Sunday, June 28th, 1914, the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, heir to the throne of Austria, arrived at Sarajevo, the capital of the province, to inspect the troops there quartered. The population of Bosnia is overwhelmingly Slav both in race and sympathy, but by a regrettable imprudence the visit of the Archduke was allowed to

coincide with the celebration of an anniversary sacred to Slav national feeling. Whether it was this blunder that cost the heir-apparent his life is not certain ; but, at any rate, the Archduke and his wife, who had accompanied him, were within a few hours assassinated by a Bosnian student. The thrill of horror which ran through Europe soon subsided and at first the tragedy seemed destined to be but a nine days' wonder. But in the weeks which followed Austria, convinced that the outrage was the outcome of anti-Austrian intrigue in Servia, was busily formulating her demands, and presented them on July 23rd. The terms of the ultimatum were harsh in the extreme, and in her distress Servia had recourse to Russia, the traditional protector of Slav peoples. On the advice of her ally Servia forwarded her reply within the forty-eight hours allowed, accepting the demands with but two reservations. Austria's answer was to recall her ambassador, and two days later she declared war on Servia.

Action of the European Powers.—The fact that Europe was grouped by treaties into what were practically two armed camps was sufficient to set the machinery of diplomacy working at full pressure throughout the Continent and to cause the other Powers to stand at once on the alert. Russia was disinclined to stand aside and witness the humiliation of her protégé by Austria, and France was bound to stand by Russia although her direct interests in Servia were infinitesimal. On the other side Germany and Italy were leagued with Austria by the terms of the Triple Alliance. Five Great Powers were thus immediately confronted with the possibility of war.

England was bound to neither side, but she did not fail to take an important precautionary step which circumstances rendered possible. A test mobilization of the Third Fleet had been carried out on July 15th, and a few

days later the First, Second, and Third Fleets had assembled at Spithead for inspection by the King. Thence the various squadrons proceeded to sea for tactical exercises which terminated on July 24th. It had been arranged that manœuvre leave should now be granted to the First Fleet. But at midnight, 26th-27th, this was cancelled by the Admiralty, and the Navy was ordered to stand fast, and England was thus enabled to watch the course of events in comparative security.

On Wednesday the 29th July the political tension of Europe had almost reached breaking point. Austria was, indeed, actually at war with Servia and was bombarding the Servian capital Belgrade. England had dispatched part of her navy to sea while holding all her squadrons in home waters in a state of instant readiness; but there was nothing aggressive in her action, for her Foreign Secretary was making superhuman efforts to induce the Great Powers to summon a Conference to mediate in the Austro-Servian quarrel. Belgium—unfortunately caught in the middle of army reorganization—was hurriedly preparing herself for eventualities by mobilization. Germany had recalled her High Seas Fleet; German troops in Metz had been pushed forward to the frontier; and the German people were withdrawing their deposits from the savings banks in considerable haste. Russia had ordered the mobilization of her southern armies.[1] France was anxiously enquiring of England what the action of the latter would be in the case of a general conflagration.

On the following day the British Foreign Secretary made fresh proposals for a European Council, but war loomed

[1] Odessa District, 7th and 8th Corps. Moscow District, 5th, 13th, 17th, 25th, and Grenadier Corps. Kieff District, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, and 21st Corps. Kazan District, 16th and 24th Corps. In all 14 Corps with a peace establishment of some 400,000 men and a war establishment of 700,000.

appreciably nearer every hour. Germany demanded that Russia should stop the mobilization of her forces, to which Russia replied that such step was technically impossible, and thereupon the German Emperor proclaimed a period of national danger. In England it was recognized that the gravity of the situation demanded every military precaution. All officers and men of the regular army who were absent from their units were recalled by telegraph, while units in training areas were directed to return at once to their mobilization centres.

On the 31st July the Foreign Secretary telegraphed to the French and German Governments asking whether they would respect the neutrality of Belgium provided it were not violated by another Power. France gave the required assurance ; Germany did not reply. Austria and Russia now issued orders for general mobilization. Belgium followed suit. The general anxiety had by this reached Holland and a complete mobilization of her forces was decreed. Switzerland was preparing to resist any violation of her neutrality. These were happenings ominous enough for one day, but graver news was yet to follow. Late in the evening the French ambassador was informed by his Government that French territory had been penetrated by German patrols.

France, Russia, Germany, and Austria at war.—These were, however, but the warnings of the tempest. The storm burst on the evening of Saturday, August 1st. About five o'clock Germany declared war on Russia. Orders were issued for a general mobilization of the German army, and similar instructions were promulgated in France. Money, always sensitive to political shock, reflected the magnitude of the disaster. In England the markets went to pieces, the Bank Rate rose to 10 per cent, and the London Stock Exchange was closed.

On Sunday the 2nd of August a German force, comprised chiefly of some of the covering troops from Coblentz advanced on Luxemburg. This Grand Duchy, about the size of an English county, had been declared neutral territory by a treaty of 1867. The object of the movement was to seize the railways running through the state towards France, and to utilize them for the movement of German troops. At the same time three German army corps were moved towards the frontier at Aix-la-Chapelle ready for an immediate advance through Belgium. There the War Office was labouring in frantic haste to place the country in a state of defence, and 30,000 navvies had all day been digging trenches round Liége. About seven o'clock in the evening a note was presented by Germany. If German troops were allowed to pass through Belgium without molestation her independence would be guaranteed by Germany, and the latter country would indemnify Belgium for all damage. The German Government asked for an answer within twelve hours. Some hours before this demand was made England had assured France that, should the German Fleet undertake hostile operations against the French coast or shipping, the British Navy would render France every assistance in its power. The Naval Reserves were called up in the United Kingdom, and orders were issued by the military authorities for the Precautionary Period to begin. Troops were dispatched to supplement the garrisons of coast defences, important bridges, tunnels, etc., upon the lines of railway were placed under guard, and the cable offices of the kingdom were submitted to military censorship and control.

During the day German troops definitely invaded France, for bodies of troops larger than mere reconnoitring patrols entered the country and penetrated several miles

into the interior.[1] On the Eastern Front Germany had followed up her declaration of war with Russia by moving troops across the Polish frontier and seizing three towns on a front of a hundred miles, while at sea a German cruiser ineffectually bombarded the Russian port of Libau.

England declares war on Germany.—At 4 a.m. on Monday, the 3rd August, the Belgian Government issued a dispatch refusing the German offer, and during the day the King of the Belgians appealed to England for assistance. In Belgium the bulk of the armed forces received orders to concentrate on Liége. That afternoon the Foreign Secretary of England, in a stirring speech in the House of Commons, insisted upon the impossibility of England remaining inactive should the neutrality of Belgium be violated. Late in the evening German troops crossed the Belgian frontier en route for the attack of the fortress of Liége, and before the day closed the French and German ambassadors had left Berlin and Paris respectively, and England was now faced with choice between peace or war. The 4th August brought matters to a crisis so far as she was concerned. Early in the day information was received of Germany's offer to Belgium, and of the categorical refusal given by the latter country. Later came the news that German troops had crossed the Belgian frontier. Instructions were at once telegraphed to the British ambassador in Berlin directing him to obtain from the German Government an assurance that Belgium's wishes would be respected; in the event of this guarantee not being given, the ambassador was to return home forthwith. Midnight was the time limit fixed for the reply, but about 11 p.m. the ambassador received his passports and England

[1] These forces entered at seven different places between Longwy and the Vosges. The French had withdrawn all troops ten kilometres from the frontier in order to render it clear that Germany was the aggressor.

and Germany were at war. Hostilities had, indeed, already begun. That very night the Hamburg-American liner *Königin Luise* was busily employed in laying mines off the eastern coast of Great Britain.

Little more than a week had passed since the Austrian ambassador had left Belgrade, yet eight nations were now at war. On the one side were Germany and Austria ; on the other France, Russia, England, Belgium, Servia, and Montenegro. Other Powers were yet to intervene ; but even by the 4th August, 1914, the arena was so full as to justify the belief that Armageddon had arrived.

CHAPTER II

THE PLANS OF CAMPAIGN

Maps 1, 2, 5.

When Germany drew the sword against Russia on Saturday, the 1st of August, 1914, France, in virtue of alliance with the latter Power, was at once involved in the struggle. Italy, however, was in a different position, for her compact with the Germanic Powers was somewhat more elastic, enabling her to assert her neutrality and to stand aside. On the 1st August, therefore, the military situation on the Continent was that Germany and Austria were at war with France and Russia. This was the cardinal feature, for the original contest between Austria and Servia at once became of a relatively minor importance.

Of the four Great Powers engaged Germany possessed the largest standing army, had the best mobilization arrangements, and was undoubtedly more war-ready than the other three. With her ally Austria she imposed a vast geographical obstacle between her foes and this central position was of immense strategic value. Further, it was Germany who had definitely thrown down the gauntlet. It was natural, therefore, that she should be the directing spirit on the Austro-German side, and that, to make the most of her military advantages, she should undertake a vigorous offensive at the earliest possible moment.

Germany's plan.—Strong though she was, she was not, even aided by her ally, strong enough to wage two mighty

offensive campaigns at one and the same time. It was beyond her power to attack right and left simultaneously with any real hope of a double success. The problem was therefore forced upon her whether to attack France first while holding Russia, or while staving off the French to throw the bulk of her forces against the east. Either solution implied two successive campaigns ; the adversary first selected for attack must be definitely crushed, while the opponent who had at first merely been held was then to be overwhelmed in turn. In other words, Germany must consume her foes in two mouthfuls instead of one.

The decision taken by Germany was to send approximately four-fifths of her army against France, while the remaining fifth, assisted by the Austrians, was to advance into Russia, to hinder the mobilization of her armies, and to keep them in check till the French campaign was finished. In the attack on France the superior German Navy would play an important rôle. By definite operations against the northern ports and by feints of landing on the coast large units of the French Army could be easily immobilized ; activity in the Mediterranean would deny to France the possibility of transporting her African troops to Europe ; while operations against her colonial possessions would not be without effect. Such action on the part of the German Navy would be possible only in the event of the non-intervention of England ; but the situation is being reviewed as it existed on August 1st, when the attitude of England had not been declared. As regards the decision of Germany to deal first with France there were cogent military reasons for such choice. The French Army was formidable ; its mobilizing power was second only to that of Germany ; and the best chance of paralysing it was to win a great victory at the outset of the struggle. Again, the French had old scores to pay off, and they were not likely to

allow themselves to be played with by a detaining force while Germany was garnering victories in the east. The desire to avenge the disasters of 1870 would undoubtedly carry on the French armies with such force as to make the tide almost impossible to stem. This factor certainly strengthened the case for making the main attack on France. Geographical considerations pointed in the same direction. Compared with Russia, France is but a small country and far more highly developed. There is none of that inaccessibility, nor that lack of roads and railways which is so characteristic of Russia. The assembly of the French armies could not be so remote from the frontier as to be beyond the range of a rapid German offensive; and, once defeated, the French armies would have no vast hinterland behind them where they could avoid pursuit and reform for another trial. In a word, a fatal blow could be driven home in France with much less difficulty than in Russia.

There were three ways by which the invasion of France could be translated into effect. An advance might be made through Switzerland; or the invasion could be launched through Alsace and Lorraine, with Luxemburg perhaps included; or an effort might be made to outflank the French left by an advance through Belgium. What Germany sought for was primarily room to deploy her immense forces with the minimum of opposition, and secondly the chance of avoiding strong fortresses, which would seriously impede the rapidity which was so essential. These considerations ruled an advance through Alsace and Lorraine immediately out of court. In that region the necessary space was lacking. Even in 1870 the frontier from the Rhine to the Moselle was barely sufficient for the deployment of sixteen army corps, and since that time the frontier had been contracted by some thirty miles by the

Treaty of Frankfort. After 1870 the French had blocked this line by the fortresses of Verdun, Toul, Epinal, and Belfort, leaving only *trouées* north and south. To invade France through Switzerland offered no advantages to compensate for the hostility of the strong Swiss Army. The route through Belgium remained, and, since the advantage of requisite space for deployment and a road to the weakest portion of the French frontier more than compensated for any possible opposition by the Belgian Army, it was selected by the German Staff.

Austria's plan.—As regards Austria, in forming a plan of campaign she had not such a free hand as her ally Germany. She had already embarked upon a war with Servia, and, inasmuch as she had undertaken such war to chastise a wrongdoer, she was committed to a policy of invasion and attack. Further, Italy was the hereditary enemy of Austria, and since she had decided not to be bound by the letter of the Triple Alliance her actual hostility was not impossible. A portion of the Austrian armies had therefore to be left to guard the Adriatic provinces, which lay open to sudden attack from the Italian side. Of the remainder of the armed forces the bulk was formed into two main armies. One was to beat back and hold at arm's length a Russian advance from the direction of Kieff, while the other, in co-operation with the Germans, was to invade Poland and shatter the Russian Army detailed for its defence.

The plans of France and Russia.—On the opposing side concerted schemes for conjoint military action by France and Russia had been for some years in existence. France was recognized to possess mobilization facilities superior to those of her ally. She was, therefore, to take the initiative as soon as possible, while Russia should do all in her power to hinder the execution of the German plan—the rapid

destruction of the French armies in the early stages of the war. The military policy of France, however, represented a clash of opposing ideals. After 1870 her immediate efforts had been directed to protecting herself from another invasion, and the fortified systems of the Meuse and Moselle were tangible evidence of her defensive intentions. Nevertheless, the offensive had always been in high favour with French strategists and harmonized with the characteristics of the nation more than any passive attitude could have done ; so that in spite of the relative decline of the French population when compared with that of Germany it had been adopted as the military policy. In devising an offensive plan of campaign, however, the French were at a certain disadvantage. Honourably determined themselves to respect the neutrality of Belgium, they credited Germany with a similar sentiment. Generally speaking, the French scheme implied an advance from the line Belfort—Nancy with the object of striking at the German troops assembling between the great fortresses Metz and Strassburg, while remaining on the defensive along the northern sector of the Franco-German frontier.

France was in the position that her territory was ringed in by seven states, Spain, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Luxemburg, Belgium, and England, and that none of them was bound to her by alliance. The neutrality of Spain was probable but not absolutely certain. Italy was in the rival camp. Switzerland had many non-French elements. Germany was the hereditary enemy. Luxemburg and Belgium were a source of weakness rather than a protection. England was a friend but not an ally. France's plan of campaign had, therefore, to ensure that the Pyrenees were not unguarded, that a large force should watch the Italian frontier, that the exits from Switzerland should be blocked, and that Belgium and

Luxemburg should be assisted if necessary. These factors imposed a severe handicap upon a nation whose relative military strength had been declining, in a contest with an antagonist who, within living memory, had beaten her to her knees.

England's plan.—Although England was not bound by definite alliance to any of the European Powers, conversations had of recent years taken place between the French and British naval and military authorities with reference to possible conjoint action. Whether such contingent action would be translated into effect depended almost entirely on the question as to whether the neutrality of Belgium would be respected. On England's adhesion to the cause of the Dual Alliance on August 4th she was the sole insular Power engaged, and the question of retaining control of the sea-routes of the world affected her to a far greater extent than it did the other combatants. In fact the question of maritime command was to her a matter of life and death. Supremacy at sea was essential for protection against invasion, for securing adequate food supply, for guaranteeing the safety of constituent portions of an overseas Empire, and for facilitating the transport of troops to the theatre of war. Her plan of campaign was therefore primarily naval, but she had available a long-service professional army of six divisions, one cavalry division, and line of communication troops with which she could, in case of necessity, reinforce the armies of France.

To judge by the outburst of fury with which its announcement was greeted in Germany the intervention of England seems to have come as a surprise to that Power. But any anticipations as to the probability of England's standing aside were really wholly unwarranted, for the calls of loyalty, of justice, and of self-interest were in-

fallibly bound to draw England into the arena. The loyalty was for France. Although not bound by definite alliance England had for long realized that joint action with France might some day be necessary, and so thorough had the understanding come to be that the bulk of the French Navy had been concentrated in the Mediterranean, thus enabling England to mass greater strength in the North Sea. This arrangement had the effect of leaving the French northern and western ports unprotected by the French Navy. Such confidence clearly implied requital, and England, therefore, though under no actual obligation, was bound to find her sympathies very warmly aroused on the side of France.

Justice was concerned with the neutrality of Belgium. That country had separated from Holland in 1830, and her neutrality had been guaranteed, both then and in 1839, by a treaty to which Austria, France, England, and Prussia had been signatories. The neutrality of Belgium was obviously most likely to be assailed by one of her immediate neighbours, France or Germany, and the question had arisen in the war of 1870 when the action of England led to such neutrality being respected by both belligerents. Nevertheless it must be admitted that changing circumstances may effect the sanctity even of a treaty guarantee, and the obligations distinctly stipulated in 1839 might not necessarily exist almost a century later.[1] This, however, could be no justification for one of the signatories taking the law into her own hands in such a way as grossly to override the most ele-

[1] On the 10th August, 1870, the then Prime Minister, speaking of the treaty of 1839, stated in the House of Commons as follows: "I am not able to subscribe to the doctrine of those who have held in this House what plainly amounts to the assertion that the simple fact of the existence of a guarantee is binding on every party to-day irrespectively altogether of the particular position in which it may find itself at the time when the occasion for acting on the guarantee arises."

mentary rights of the neutral state. Quite apart from the question whether the principles of abstract justice were, or were not, outraged, a Great Power like England could not possibly witness the tearing up of a treaty, to which she had been a signatory, without some form of protest.

It may, however, at once be admitted that England's interest in the neutrality of Belgium was military rather than diplomatic, and a matter less of sentiment than of self-interest. The occupation of the Belgian sea board by an immensely strong military power—a power whose navy was second only to that of England—would obviously be a most serious menace to the latter country. A successful occupation of Belgium by Germany would, moreover, greatly facilitate the seizure of the northern ports of France, which, be it recollected, were absolutely unprotected owing to the concentration of the French Navy in the Mediterranean. With regard to this England had revealed her intentions in the clearest and most unequivocal manner. In 1905 at Algeciras she had afforded France the most effective diplomatic support against the claims of Germany, and six years later in the Agadir imbroglio she plainly showed that she was prepared to back diplomacy with force. Her purpose was diamond-clear. She would not, without a struggle, tolerate the aggrandizement of Germany at the expense of France, nor would she on any account allow her greatest maritime rival to become her immediate neighbour. To have done so would simply have amounted to a negation of the principle of the Balance of Power for which England had fought, off and on, for more than two centuries. She could no more be expected to tolerate a German occupation of the Channel littoral than Germany could have been expected to assent to the conversion of Danish and Swedish harbours into British naval bases. There was not a Foreign

Office in Europe where the determination of England was not fully known, and the diplomatists and staff officers of Germany who favoured an invasion of France through Belgium could not possibly have been under any misapprehension as to the effect such action would produce throughout the whole British Empire.

Where Germany miscalculated was not in respect to the intention of England to intervene, but in respect to her ability to do so. Early in 1914 the internal situation of the United Kingdom had been disquieting in the extreme. The passage of an act granting self-government to Ireland had produced a cleavage of public opinion practically unparalleled, while in the north of Ireland it had aroused an opposition which appeared likely to terminate in bloodshed. Civil war was on the lips of the people. The question as to whether the army would be employed to settle these internal differences had thrust itself into prominence, and had led to the resignations of the Secretary of State for War and the Chief of the Imperial General Staff. It is certain that these symptoms of unrest were grossly misjudged by the German people, by whom the conclusion was reached that England would have to stay her hand. The real and unwelcome surprise for Germany was the instantaneous cessation of political dissension in the United Kingdom in the face of national danger.

CHAPTER III

THE MILITARY STRENGTH OF THE COMBATANTS

Maps 1, 2.

A REVIEW of the plans of campaign of the Great Powers committed to the struggle which began in August, 1914, leads naturally to a discussion of the military and naval resources by means of which they proposed to carry such plans into effect. And inasmuch as the initial efforts were at first primarily confined to land operations, it will be convenient to review the armies of the various combatants before touching on purely naval matters.

The German Army.—The growth of the German Army into the perfected military machine of the twentieth century had by no means been unchequered. Rather does it represent the resurrection of a military greatness which had been overwhelmed in humiliation and defeat. In the middle of the eighteenth century Frederick II, King of Prussia, was acknowledged as the greatest general of his age; and since he inherited the best-organized, best-equipped, and best-trained army in Europe he made his country the military model of the world. The victorious era of Frederick the Great was, however, followed by reaction; and when the French Revolution broke out dry rot had done its work, leaving the Prussian military machine in a state of rusting inefficiency. Against the formidable French armies, commanded by Napoleon, the

obsolete tactics, mediocre leadership, and old-fashioned organization of Prussia could offer no effective resistance; and at Jena in 1806 the military power of Prussia was completely overthrown. Apart from the fact that it signalized the success of promptitude and vigour over hide-bound tradition and military sloth, the battle of Jena was of outstanding importance in another respect. It represented the triumph of a nation in arms over the army of a monarch. Prior to the French Revolution a nation's army represented the sovereign's armed legionaries, and kings kept armies as country gentlemen might keep packs of hounds. Limited in numbers, lacking cohesion from the excessive importation of mercenary strains, and deficient in training owing to the general military mediocrity of their masters, such armies could not survive the shock brought about by the changes due to Revolutionary ideals.

The Treaty of Tilsit in 1807 robbed Prussia of half her territory. It left her a population of barely four and a half million inhabitants, a land ruined by war, and a government crippled with the task of paying off an enormous war indemnity. Military recovery was still further handicapped by the decision of Napoleon to limit the Prussian forces to an army of 43,000 men. In this hour of humiliation the genius of Scharnhorst devised a scheme to restore his country. Adopting the French scheme of compulsory military service, he grafted on it the great system of "short service"—that is to say, a method of submitting all the available male population to an intensive military training, passing them quickly through the ranks, and transferring them to an ever-swelling reserve. In vain did Napoleon endeavour to stifle these reforms and to restrict the Prussian army to the meagre limit he had assigned. The standing army became

a fluid one. Trained men silently glided away into civil life, their places were taken by raw recruits in equal silence. As a result Prussia, with an army of nominally 43,000, had, in 1812, 150,000 men trained to arms. In that year these soldiers stood up against Napoleon at Lutzen and Bautzen; and, though defeated, their tenacity and courage prevented Napoleon from using his victories. He admitted that the Prussians were his most formidable opponents. The next year Napoleon met defeat at Leipzig, and in that battle the Prussians contributed largely to the victory of the Allies.

The successful reconstruction of the Prussian army was due, therefore, to two expedients—the adoption of universal service and the method of building up the largest possible reserve of trained men. Under Bismarck, von Moltke and von Roon the system was extended to the other German states. By 1866 it was not in thorough working order; but it was sufficiently formidable to beat down Austria in the Seven Weeks' War, while the experience gained by that campaign enabled the system to be used with crushing effect against France four years later. Since 1870 no effort has been spared further to improve the already formidable German machine, and details of its mechanism may now be examined.

The main result of the Franco-Prussian war was the welding of the various Germanic confederations, principalities, duchies, and quasi-independent states into one German Empire. A wider field was thus secured. The population of Germany, according to the census of 1910, was roughly sixty-five millions, of which total practically half were males. By law the whole of this 32,000,000 male population was placed at the disposal of the state for purposes of defence, and every German was liable to serve from the age of seventeen, although in practice military service

usually began with the twentieth or twenty-first year. Various considerations such as physical unfitness, the expense of an unduly large army, the requirements of a great navy, and the necessity of leaving sufficient of the male population to carry on the interior working of the country tended to the result that of the available population of males not quite one-half was actually conscripted for military service. Service with the colours was for two years with an additional year for cavalry and horse artillery, and after his period of colour service the trained soldier was passed into the Regular Reserve for four or five years, according to the arm of service to which he belonged. On the completion of this period of seven years the soldier was placed in the first ban of the Landwehr for a further period of five years, and then entered the second ban where he remained until he had completed his thirty-ninth year. Next came service in the Landsturm, in which the original conscript continued until the age of forty-five. Over and above the numbers provided by this system remained those who, for various reasons, had escaped the call to the colours. A certain number of these were absorbed into the Ersatz Reserve in which they remained for twelve and a half years, performing in that period three trainings of from four to ten weeks' duration ; thence they passed into the Landsturm, remaining in the first ban till thirty-nine, and proceeding thence to the second ban where they remained available until they had completed their forty-fifth year. By this system Germany was enabled to place in the field a First Line Army of some 1,500,000 formed from the Active Army and the Regular Reserve. Behind this was the organized Landwehr from 750,000 to 1,000,000 strong. In all it may be said that on the outbreak of war there were available some 10,500,000 men fit for military service, of whom 4,000,000 had actually served with the colours,

and at least another million who had received military training in some shape or other.[1]

When war broke out the German Army consisted of twenty-five army corps each of two divisions of infantry. The infantry division consisted of four regiments, each of three battalions, and for tactical purposes two regiments formed a brigade. Besides its infantry divisions each army corps had its artillery and a contingent of cavalry as well as a special rifle battalion. Each corps, with the exception of the Guard Corps,[2] was recruited on a territorial basis, and each army corps district formed a distinct administrative area. The twenty-five army corps were as follows :

Corps.	Corps District.[3]
Guard	Berlin.
I	East Prussia.
II	Pomerania.
III	Brandenburg.
IV	Prussian Saxony.
V	Posen.

[1] In 1912 the number borne on the recruiting list was 1,289,868, which included 557,608 men who had just reached the military age of twenty, the balance being "postponed" men over that age. They were dealt with as follows :

Excluded from Military Service.	Physically Unfit.	Posted to Land-sturm.	Posted to Ersatz Reserve.	Taken for Standing Army.	Taken for Navy.	Postponed, Emigrants and Excess.	Total.
916	34,211	187,922	87,706	261,251	21,380	746,482	1,289,868

In addition to the above, 28,782 enlisted as volunteers before reaching the military age (twenty). The above figures are taken from the official publication, *Übersicht der Ergebnisse des Heeresergänzungsgeschäfts sowie eine Nachweisung über die Herkunft und Beschäftigung der Militärpflichtigen für das Jahr* 1912.

[2] And, to a limited extent, the XVth, XVIth, and XXIst Corps.

[3] To avoid overcrowding Map 1 these districts are not shown. thereon.

Corps.	Corps District.
VI	Silesia.
VII	Westphalia.
VIII	Rhineland.
IX	Holstein, etc.
X	Hanover.
XI	Hesse-Cassel.
XII	East Saxony.
XIII	Würtemberg.
XIV	Baden.
XV	Alsace.
XVI	Lorraine.
XVII	West Prussia.
XVIII	Hesse, Darmstadt, etc.
XIX	West Saxony.
XX	East Prussia.
XXI	Alsace and Lorraine.
I Bavarian ..	Bavaria.
II Bavarian ..	Bavaria.
III Bavarian ..	Bavaria.

From the numbers surplus to the requirements of these twenty-five army corps reserve brigades, divisions, and even complete army corps were quickly formed when war broke out. The numeration of these units was, probably from design, not made consecutive to the twenty-five corps of the normal peace establishment. In the narrative of the Marne campaign German corps will be mentioned bearing numbers from I to XXI qualified by the word Reserve, and a recollection of the fact will obviate the confusion of these corps with those of the Regular Peace Establishment.

The officering of this formidable military machine is a subject which will repay attention. The German military system was the outcome and extension of the system devised

by Scharnhorst for the military regeneration of Prussia. That kingdom was traditionally aristocratic; for those of noble birth the profession of arms was practically the only one open; and the aristocracy of country gentlemen in Prussia impressed their feudal ideals not only on the Prussian corps of officers, but upon the armies of the other German states. The spread of these doctrines was rendered easy by the relative size of the Prussian Army when compared with the armies from the other portions of the Empire. Formerly a commission was only bestowed upon applicants of aristocratic birth; but, with the growth of less exclusive ideals, the middle classes were admitted to commissioned rank. In a conservative institution, such as an army almost always is, tradition exerts very considerable influence, so that in spite of the widening of the field from which officers were supplied the aristocratic impress still remained, and the social importance of the German officer class was undoubtedly very great. The cult of such traditions has not, in the past, in all cases contributed to military efficiency; but when the leaders devoted themselves—as German officers did—to a life of strenuous self-sacrifice and were imbued with unquestioned zeal for their profession the result spelt efficiency. The reverence in which officers were held clung to the German soldier long after he had passed back into civil life, and even when he had come to hold political opinions distinguished by anything but an aristocratic bias.

The feudal character of the German Army was enhanced by the system under which the highest command was retained in the sovereign's hand. In the old Prussian Army the command was vested in the king, and the genius of Frederick the Great more than justified the system. The modern requirements of war, however, necessitated some

modification, more particularly when armies ceased to be merely the hired soldiery of the king, and when it was fairly obvious that not every king could be a Frederick. The real command came to be exercised by the Chief of the Staff, and although King William I of Prussia took the field in 1870 as nominal commander-in-chief of the German forces, he invariably acquiesced in the suggestions put forward by his chief staff officer von Moltke. When the King of Prussia became German Emperor in 1871 the supreme command of the army was expressly entrusted to him and to his heirs. Such command might be, and indeed was, really nominal,—nevertheless its effect was not inconsiderable on the German Army. The soldier in the ranks did not realize the technical niceties of Headquarter etiquette. So far as he was concerned his sovereign was in the field, sharing some of his dangers, and from such sovereign emanated all the orders which he must obey. The impulses of patriotism and loyalty were thus stimulated in a manner bound to produce the maximum of self-sacrifice and devotion.

The Austrian Army.—The influence of the Prussian organization perfected by Scharnhorst soon spread to Austria, but for divers reasons the same pitch of perfection was never reached. In the first place political and racial differences in the Dual Monarchy militated considerably against the formation of a coherent military machine. Of the total population of some fifty millions, little more than one-fifth were of Germanic origin, the residue differing widely in language, temperament, and history from the German-speaking inhabitants of Austria. This residue formed a mosaic encircling the Empire composed of Czeches, Poles, Rumanians, Russians, Croats, and other Slavs whose loyalty was of more than doubtful quality. Secondly, the centuries of tradition which Austria had

garnered as the historic head of the Holy Roman Empire had exalted aristocratic ideals to a height never reached even in Prussia; and these forces of reaction found no von Moltke nor von Roon to counteract them, though of late years the Austrian corps of officers had begun to earn a reputation for professional knowledge second to no similar body in Europe, except the French. In the third place the army was uplifted by no traditions of victory such as had inspired Germany since 1866 and 1870. For over a hundred years the campaigns of Austria had been signalized mainly by defeat—though it is only just to mention that in 1859 and 1866 Austria stood single-handed against two opponents, and that in the latter campaign the new needle-gun gave Prussia an overwhelming advantage. The result of these circumstances was that, although the Austrian military organization was fashioned on that of Germany, it lacked the precision, efficiency, and cohesion of its model. In 1912 and 1913 the military system had been thoroughly overhauled. Universal liability for service existed as in other European nations, but a far smaller proportion of the male population than in Germany had passed through the ranks. A recruit selected for the Regular Army spent two or three years with the colours, and thereafter a period varying from seven to ten years in the Regular Reserve. From this reserve he passed to the Landwehr, and subsequently to the Landsturm, his service concluding generally in his forty-second year. On peace footing the strength of the army was somewhere in the neighbourhood of 400,000 men formed into sixteen army corps, of which two were required for the occupation of the recently annexed province of Bosnia. The total available military strength was about 7,000,000, of which number, roughly speaking, one-third may be said to have received more or less of military

training. The facilities for rapid mobilization were markedly inferior to those enjoyed by Germany, for, apart from the comparative meagreness of her railway system, Austria was gravely handicapped by the fact that for racial reasons many of her frontier subjects could not be employed in operations across their immediate borders.

The French Army.—If Germany rebuilt her army on the ruins of former military greatness the same is doubly true of France. The French Army under Napoleon had achieved victories which put those of Frederick completely in the shade. But if its greatness exceeded that of the Prussian Army its ruin was the more complete. In 1870 the French Regular Army was not merely defeated; it was annihilated. The fault did not lie with the French soldier, but in defective administration, and in mediocrity, not to say actual incompetence, in the higher command. The foundations were sound, and re-erection was rendered all the easier by the complete ruin of the flimsy superstructure. By 1914 the recovery of the French Army was complete. The system of universal service had been rigidly enforced, exemption being granted only for indisputable physical unfitness, and in this way every effort was made to reduce the disparity caused by the relatively small size of the population when compared with that of Germany.[1] The army consisted of three distinct organizations: the Home Army, which included the establishments of Tunis and Algeria; three divisions of Colonial troops liable for service in the colonies, but actually quartered in France; and Colonial Troops amounting to some 130,000 men of whom about half were coloured. It will be sufficient to describe the conditions of service in the first named.

[1] The population of Germany, in 1910, was 64,925,993; that of France, in 1911, was 39,601,509.

At the age of twenty the conscript joined the colours for three years, and, on the conclusion of that period, passed to the Active Reserve for another term of eleven years. He then proceeded to the Territorial Army where he spent a further seven years, and a further similar term of service in the Territorial Reserve completed his service as a soldier. By this system France hoped to be able to place in the field a First Line Army of one and a half million men, formed from the Regular Army and the Active Reserve, behind which there would be a further 2,500,000 trained men.

The Regular Army was divided into twenty-one army corps, recruited on a territorial basis, of which one corps, the 19th, was quartered in Algeria—while a 22nd corps was formed from the Colonial Army quartered in France. The organization of a French army corps approximated to that adopted in Germany, that is to say the corps had two infantry divisions each of two brigades ; each brigade was made up of two regiments ; and each regiment possessed three battalions of 1000 men apiece. Each corps had its complement of cavalry, artillery, and auxiliary troops, while over and above the establishment of the twenty-two army corps were eight independent cavalry divisions each of six regiments.[1] In military efficiency the French Army stood very high. The infantry were probably the best marchers in Europe, and retained the dash and *élan* which had always characterized them ; the cavalry had been brought to a very high state of training, although possibly the employment of fire action had not been developed to the extent demanded in modern warfare ; and the French artillery was armed with the best quick-firing gun in Europe, an advantage which was however

[1] It is believed that the number of cavalry divisions had been increased to ten when war broke out.

discounted by a notable lack of howitzers. Last, but by no means least, the French General Staff had for years shown itself to be a military organization of the highest class. Much of the best military literature of modern times was from the pen of French officers, and in their comments on the strategy and tactics of recent campaigns they had shown an appreciation of modern conditions and a breadth of view which spoke volumes for the soundness of their training. The French Army was thus an extremely formidable one. Compared with that of Germany it showed an inferiority in numbers, but man for man it was probably of superior fighting value. This superiority, however, dwindled with the older class of soldiers, and it is doubtful whether the Territorial Reserve, as a whole, was equal to the German Landsturm troops of the same age.

A short reference may fittingly be made to the French field gun—the famous Soixante-quinze or "75," so called from its calibre of 75 millimetres. In 1898 France surprised the armies of the world by the introduction of an artillery weapon which till then had only existed in the dreams of experts. Till that year the rate of artillery fire was retarded by the fact that after the gun was laid and fired the shock of the discharge so upset the aim that the gun had to be relaid for a second shot, and the rapidity of fire, therefore, depended upon how quickly and accurately the gun could be laid by the personal skill of the layer. The French improved by mechanism what could not be further improved by human effort. The French field gun of 1898 was not attached to its axle-tree but to a buffer in a cradle, which not only absorbed the shock of the recoil but ran back the gun so exactly into its former position that no second laying was necessary. Such was the genesis of the quick-firing field

gun which is now in universal use but in which the French still retain pre-eminence.

The recoil in the French gun is taken up by a cylinder beneath the gun which contains a combination of glycerine, compressed air, and springs. The combination and the exact proportions are secret, and cannot be ascertained on the capture of a gun, for examination of the buffer necessarily releases the compressed air and the secret which lies in its density escapes with it. Thanks to this contrivance and to the efficacy of a mechanical fuze-setter the French field gun is capable of twenty-five aimed rounds a minute. Increase of range was obtained by increasing the length of the gun to the previously unheard of length of nearly nine feet, and by giving it a slow-burning propellant.

The projectiles employed are a 16 lb. shrapnel shell with a muzzle velocity of 1739 f.s. and a high explosive shell of nearly 12 lbs. which leaves the gun at the very high velocity of 2050 feet a second. By a combination of *tir fauchant* (or mowing fire), obtained by traversing the gun and cradle, and *tir progressif*, which can follow up a target as it advances or recedes, the battery commander is able to plaster any piece of ground so effectively with shrapnel that nothing can survive. This is the "squall," or *rafale*, to use the French technical term. These field pieces are organized in four-gun batteries, each battery having twelve wagons to cope with the vital question of ammunition supply, and to such a pitch of perfection has the accuracy of the gun been brought that it is not uncommon for the battery observing officer to alter the range—when the target is some two miles from the gun—by as little as three yards so as to ensure absolute precision. An eye-witness of the effect of shells thus dropped into a German trench aptly describes it as "like posting letters."[1]

[1] Pousse Cailloux, 75's, *Blackwood's Magazine*, January, 1916.

The Russian Army.—Of all the Great Powers engaged Russia had the greatest and most recent experience of modern war. Such experience had been purchased at the cost of defeat, but not of disaster. The war in Manchuria had been far from decisive, and there was all the difference in the world between Mukden and Jena or Sedan. Opposed to the fanatical bravery of Japan the Russian soldier had shown stubbornness and resolution, coupled with a marvellous power of recuperation ; the Russian regimental officers had led their men with unquestioned bravery ; and the problem of supplying an army of from half to three-quarters of a million men by a single line of railway 3000 miles in length, had been a triumph of staff administration. On the other side of the shield had been the failure of the higher command—relieved though it was by some brilliant exceptions ; a general tendency to regard avoidance of defeat as synonymous with victory ; decided lack of initiative in almost every rank ; and the marked failure of the much vaunted Cossacks to withstand the handful of Japanese cavalry by which they were opposed. The lessons of the war were not lost on Russia, and reforms were set in motion so soon as peace was declared. Like all other continental nations Russia utilized the system of compulsory service ; although the vastness of the population enabled her to allow many exemptions, leaving her with an untapped reservoir of man power that was practically inexhaustible.[1] Service with the colours began usually at the twenty-first year and was for three years in the infantry and field artillery, an extra year being required in the mounted services.[2] The military service of the con-

[1] The population of European Russia exceeds 138,000,000 ; and the population of the whole Russian Empire is roughly 173,000,000.

[2] The system of universal compulsory service does not apply to the Grand Duchy of Finland. Cossack troops are recruited on a different basis and serve twelve years in the Regular Army.

script lasted until he was forty-five, the last nineteen or twenty years being passed in various reserve organizations. When war broke out in August, 1914, Russia's First Line troops were organized in thirty-seven army corps : viz. the Guard Corps, the Grenadier Corps, twenty-five corps of the line, three Caucasian army corps, two in Turkestan, and the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th Siberian Corps. It was at first expected that the last mentioned could not be safely withdrawn from the Far East ; but the subsequent adhesion of Japan to the cause of the Allies removed all military objection, greatly to the advantage of Russia, for her Siberian troops had no superiors in the Manchurian campaign. Over and above the thirty-seven army corps Russia disposed of a very large cavalry force. Two features of Russian infantry organization may be mentioned. Firstly, all training is based upon the idea of coming to grips with the enemy, and to impress this ideal on the soldier the bayonet is always carried fixed ; secondly, every battalion comprises a section of *Okhótniki* or " Hunter-Scouts "—selected men trained in scouting, signalling, hasty demolitions, climbing, etc., for employment on tasks of an independent and isolated nature. Formed by Imperial decree in 1886 the Hunter-Scouts by their daring, initiative, and devotion to duty have amply justified their existence. Although the vast numbers available in the Russian Empire rendered Russia a most formidable Power from the military point of view, such strength was seriously discounted by the undeveloped nature of the country. Communications of all kind are sparse, the railway system meagre, and the distances vast. Rapid mobilization and concentration were, therefore, attended with especial difficulty, although as a matter of fact organization and forethought triumphed over these obstacles, and the speed with which mobilization was effected upset the calculations of the German General Staff.

The British Army.—The object of the British military system was threefold. It aimed firstly at the maintenance of an adequate white garrison in India, the protection of the Mediterranean and Red Sea highway to that great dependency, and the local defence of naval coaling stations. Secondly, there was the necessity of maintaining in the British Isles a highly equipped and professional army for service in any portion of the globe. And in the third place a second line army was required for home defence in the event of actual or threatened invasion, in the absence of the Expeditionary Force abroad. In four important respects the British Army differed from those of the great continental Powers. It was a small army; service in it was entirely voluntary; the great majority of its soldiers remained with the colours for as long as seven years; and, in spite of its diminutive size it was widely scattered all over the globe. These characteristics were due to the conditions of the British Empire which differed widely from those of a continental state. The insular condition of the United Kingdom made the sea its frontier, and by constituting the navy as the first and principal line of defence made—or seemed to make—the provision of a large standing army in the United Kingdom unnecessary, while the same factors enabled England to maintain a certain aloofness from European politics, and to regard intervention in a continental war as possible but improbable. As regards the principle of voluntaryism, the fact that much military service had to be performed overseas and in unfavourable climates would have made compulsion a burden far heavier than that endured in continental nations where conscript service is performed at home. Universal military service for Home Defence was in a different category, but it was considered sounder policy to maintain a super-powerful navy than to dissipate energy

in the attempt to be strong by land as well as sea, and the strategic aim of England was to keep the invader out rather than to defeat him on arrival. Length of colour service was required in an army so much of whose duty was overseas for three reasons. The soldier had to arrive fully trained so as to be able to take his place in the fighting line in emergency; this required one or two years' service at home. Secondly, after his arrival abroad, several years were required to accustom him to a climate usually tropical, and to harden him to service under conditions necessarily trying. Finally, the factor of expense rendered it impossible to be continually transporting soldiers backwards and forwards as would have been the case had a short term system been in vogue. As regards the diffusion of the army over the globe the tendency had been to limit this extension so far as possible, and the principle had been adopted of allowing the self-governing dominions to provide their own defence so soon as they were in a position to do so. Within the memory of many of those still serving British garrisons had been wholly, or almost entirely withdrawn, from Canada, South Africa, and the West Indies, and a previous generation had witnessed a similar evacuation of Australia and New Zealand. Normally the principal military strength of the British Army was concentrated in India, where, in addition to the native Indian Army, there were permanently quartered some 76,000 British troops. The provision of a garrison of this size, all of whose members had to arrive fully trained, was a decided drain upon the army quartered in the British Isles. Generally speaking the ordinary engagement of the British soldier was for seven years with the colours and five in the reserve. For the first eighteen months or two years he served with a battalion at home, proceeding then in the majority of cases to India. The

home battalions consisted, therefore, very largely of recruits with a small nucleus of non-commissioned officers, and of older soldiers who had returned home for discharge on completion of their colour service.

Unlike the armies which, in the past, England had sent overseas the British Expeditionary Force was no mere improvisation. Its organization had been completely worked out and the units of which it was formed were to take the field under the general officers by whom they had been trained. Its strength had been laid down at some 160,000 of all ranks. To obtain these numbers there were Regular Troops to the number of 136,000 in the United Kingdom, and an Army Reserve of some 140,000 more. Owing to the Indian drain referred to above a large portion of the latter had, however, to be at once drafted to the colours to enable the regiments of the Home Regular Army to take the field. The Expeditionary Force consisted of six divisions of infantry, one cavalry division with an additional cavalry brigade, and line of communication troops. The British division consisted of three infantry brigades each of four battalions, possessed seventy-two guns,[1] and was furnished with the necessary quota of cavalry, engineers, and auxiliary services. The cavalry division consisted of very highly trained and well-mounted troops, composed of four brigades, each of three regiments of three squadrons apiece, while each cavalry brigade had its battery of horse artillery. Generally speaking the organization of a British division approximated to that of continental nations, the chief difference being between the composition of the British infantry brigade and its nearest equivalent, the continental infantry regiment. The latter consisted permanently of the same three sister battalions, while the British brigade was made up of the union of four

[1] 54 quick-firing field guns, 12 howitzers, 6 heavy guns.

fortuitous battalions, having no military connection one with another, and in a constant state of flux. Owing to the demands of foreign service a battalion seldom remained in its brigade for more than two years, with the result that an infantry brigade was completely transformed every six or seven years. The same was of course equally true of a division on a more extended scale. Shortly before the war an important change had been made in the organization of the battalion, the obsolete system of eight companies giving way to the adoption of the four company battalion, which placed the British battalion on the same footing as that of the Continental Powers.

To supply the drafts certain to be required by the wastage in war there remained the untapped surplus of the Army Reserve and the Special Reserve. The latter force was the old Militia which, in 1907, had been reconstituted and made liable for foreign service. Apart from some fortress artillery and a couple of cavalry regiments it consisted of a hundred battalions of infantry linked up to battalions of the Regular Army, and was about 80,000 strong. In spite of extraordinary immunity from disease, wastage was, however, to reach an unexpectedly high figure, and it was soon to be revealed that the reserves to replace it would not go very far.

As regards the problem of Home Defence, the Navy was regarded as the primary line of defence against invasion on an extended scale. Minor raids had, however, to be considered, and to deal with these, when once the Expeditionary Force had embarked, there was firstly a nucleus of regular battalions still left. Reliance was, however, mainly placed on the volunteer citizen army known as the Territorials. These had been recruited especially for this purpose ; consisted of all arms ; and were provided with auxiliary services. The establishment

of the Territorial Army was 316,500, and it was organized in fourteen divisions, but a large proportion of the regiments were below strength, and of the enrolled men a considerable proportion had not been able to attend even the moderate course of annual training prescribed. Behind this force there stood the National Reserve formed mainly of old ex-regular soldiers whose five years' service in the Army Reserve had come to an end. This force was unorganized ; but, consisting largely as it did of men inured to military discipline and possessed of training it provided a reservoir which could be drawn upon in the hour of need. Its strength in August, 1914, was in the neighbourhood of 200,000. This brief sketch of the pre-war organization of the British Army is, however, but of historical interest. The vastness of the struggle soon caused most radical alterations, and before the war was forty-eight hours old the House of Commons had sanctioned an increase of the Regular Army by 500,000 men. No mention, too, has been made of the instantaneous rally of the Overseas Dominions to the Mother Country nor of the assistance provided by drawing on the Indian Army. The aid rendered by both these sources was invaluable, but it did not make its effect felt till after the conclusion of the Marne Campaign, with which this volume is primarily concerned.

The Belgian Army.—Until 1909, although the system of universal military service was nominally in force, the Belgian Army consisted of only some 45,000 men. In that year, however, and later in 1913, the principle of a "nation in arms" was further extended. By the new system it was designed to have a field army of 150,000, garrison troops for the fortresses of Antwerp, Namur, and Liége to the number of 130,000, with a further 60,000 for line of communication duty, a total of 340,000 men.

The Field Army was organized in six divisions of infantry and one cavalry division, and for reinforcing it there were available some 50,000 *Gardes Civiques*. Unfortunately the new army scheme was only in process of completion when war broke out, and units were forced to take the field much below strength. The fact that the neutrality of Belgium had been guaranteed by most of the Great Powers of Europe had tended to side-track the question of national defence—and the fact that such neutrality had been respected in 1870 gave a false sense of security—while belief in the resisting power of fortresses had caused an exaggerated view to be taken of the defensive capabilities of Liége and Namur. The population of Belgium was some seven and a half millions; the country is compact and provided with excellent means of communication; and the fortresses of Liége and Namur formed *têtes-de-pont* on the line of the Meuse against invasion by either France or Germany. A force of half a million was not beyond the strength of Belgium, and had the reforms in military organization been started but a few years earlier a large reserve would have been built up and the course of the war might have been radically changed.

The Servian Army.—Although Servia was but a small state, her population being less than half that of London, she possessed an army which had much recent experience of war. Against Turkey in 1912 that army had played an important part, and in the following year Servia had waged a brilliant campaign against the victorious Bulgarians. National service was the system in vogue. The first ban consisting of men from twenty-one to thirty years of age furnished five divisions of all arms, a cavalry division, and some mountain artillery, as well as providing a surplus from which a supplementary one and a half divisions could be formed. A second ban of men up to thirty-eight yielded

another five divisions of second line troops. The third ban was really a militia composed of infantry and cavalry raised on a territorial basis and consisting of men up to forty-five. On a peace footing the army consisted of 30,000 of all ranks, but in time of war at least 300,000 trained men could be called to the colours. These men, drawn almost entirely from a hardy peasant population, could be trusted to endure hardships intolerable to the soldiery of Western Europe, and their fighting spirit, particularly against Austria, was undoubtedly very high. These qualities, however, were to a large extent counterbalanced by the extreme poverty of the country. Equipment, arms, ammunition, and reserves of supplies were lacking to a great extent. The immobility thus imposed rendered any offensive on a large scale against Austria out of the question ; but in defence the soldierly qualities of the Servian troops when aided by the difficult nature of the country were likely to be of considerable value.

The Montenegrin Army.—As regards the army of Montenegro it was of microscopic dimensions when compared with the hordes at the disposal of the Greater Powers. The population was only estimated at half a million, and probably not more than 40,000 soldiers could have been put into the field even if modern fire-arms and ammunition had been sufficiently available, which was very doubtful. The army was a primitive force, more properly a peasant militia, weak in artillery, practically without cavalry, with no medical service, and lacking a regular organization of transport and supply. Communications are indifferent and the country is practically without railways. As a fighting man the Montenegrin takes a high place, and in 1912 Montenegro had joined with Bulgaria, Servia and Greece in the war against Turkey, the successful outcome of which resulted in an

extension of territory at the Turks' expense. In spite of the small size of the Montenegrin Army these factors, coupled with the geographical situation of Montenegro, served to protect the Servian left flank against any possible Austrian movement from the Adriatic coast.

The Japanese Army.—Although Japan did not join in the struggle at its very outset her intervention took place during the period treated of in this volume, and a reference to her military strength may, therefore, be made in this chapter. The Japanese Army was of extremely modern growth, for little more than half a century separated the era of chain mail from her hour of triumph in Manchuria. In that campaign the Western world had been somewhat staggered by the successes which Japan gained over the numerically superior forces of a Great European Power. Such successes were the outcome of Japanese national characteristics which developed a patriotism almost fanatical in character, a contempt for death, and a devotion to the Emperor which amounted to a religion. These valuable military qualities were buttressed by the mental adaptability of the Japanese who had quickly assimilated all the organization, strategy, and tactics which their German instructors could teach them, and were made the most of by a General Staff whose strategy, if not absolutely brilliant, was yet orthodox and sound, and whose " staff work " was of the very highest class. In a word the Japanese Army conveyed the impression that it was an army of the class that would go anywhere and do anything for the sake of a national ideal. It was essentially an attacking army. August, 1914, found Japan with the system of universal and compulsory military service for all men between the ages of seventeen and forty, such service being passed in the Regular Army, and in a progressive series of reserve formations as on the European Continent. The peace effective was 240,000 of all ranks,

and the war strength provided a First Line Army of 450,000, with a Regular Reserve of some 300,000 more. Over and above these figures was an immense reserve of manhood, for the population of Japan exceeded sixty-seven millions, or nearly three million more than the German Empire. The Japanese Army was organized in divisions recruited, with the exception of the Guard Division, on a territorial basis. The weak point of the army was its cavalry, for, unlike the Chinese, the Japanese make indifferent horsemen. Nevertheless their two brigades of mounted troops rendered an excellent account of themselves in the Russo-Japanese War. They quite stifled the efforts of the Cossacks, and carried out more than one extended raid with remarkable success.

CHAPTER IV

THE NAVAL STRENGTH OF THE COMBATANTS

Maps 3, 1.

The German Navy.—Though second on the list of the navies of the world, the German Navy was of extremely modern growth. To go back no further than 1848, the operations of Prussia in the war with Denmark were for a time completely baffled by the superior maritime resources of the Danes; and in 1870 a proportion of the Prussian Army had to be kept in the country to guard against possible combined naval and military operations by the superior French fleet. Even as late as 1896, when a message from the German Emperor to the President of the South African Republic caused some commotion in England, the mobilization by the latter of a single squadron was a sufficient hint. Since that year, however, the growth of the German Navy had been rapid and continuous. The matter received the energetic support of the Emperor, while a skilful Press campaign, aided by the formation of sundry Navy Leagues, inflamed the German people with great enthusiasm for maritime development. On the outbreak of war Germany possessed thirteen battleships of the Dreadnought type, ranging in size from 18,600 to 24,100 tons, all of which were less than five years old. These formed three homogeneous classes of four, four, and five vessels apiece, with a speed ranging from 20 knots in the oldest, to 23½ in the most recent class, and equipped

with guns up to 12·2 inch calibre in the latter two groups. Three larger battleships of 26,000 tons were approaching completion carrying a similar armament, but with thicker armour and more powerful engines, while another four were on the stocks. Four very powerful battle-cruisers, the *Goeben*, *Von der Tann*, *Moltke*, and *Seydlitz*, were also in commission, with guns up to 11-inch calibre. These vessels possessed extreme speed, the *Moltke* having steamed 28·4 knots on her trials, while the *Seydlitz* was stated, though not officially, to have touched 30 knots. A battle-cruiser, the *Salamis*, under construction for the Greek Government, was stated to have been taken over by Germany, and four other vessels, destined for the German Navy, were completing, one of them, the *Derfflinger*, being almost due for delivery. Of older battleships Germany possessed about thirty, the bulk of which dated from the period 1891–1908. In large cruisers the naval strength of Germany was but small, only nine standing to her credit ; but of light cruisers she possessed the respectable number of forty-three. The number of destroyers was somewhere in the neighbourhood of one hundred and fifty, and so far as is known Germany possessed some forty submarines, a class of vessel in which she pinned much faith for employment in a naval war of attrition. One naval asset Germany had, the full value of which was not realized on the outbreak of war, namely, a number of rigid airships of the Zeppelin type. The scouting capabilities of these dirigibles were soon proved, and, equipped as they were with wireless installations, they compensated Germany to some extent for her lack of cruisers. These airships were also likely to prove of value in attacking naval bases at night.

The personnel of the German Navy amounted to about 80,000,and it was provided chiefly by conscription, although about a quarter of the sailors were volunteers, chiefly sea-

faring men from the Frisian and Baltic Islands. The term of service for the conscripted seamen was three years. The officers, drawn from a somewhat wider class than that which kept the army filled, possessed professional attainments of an extremely high order. With the exception of the battle-cruiser *Goeben* and the light cruiser *Breslau* in the Mediterranean, and a small cruiser squadron in the Far East, Germany had practically all her fleet concentrated in home waters.

A noticeable feature of these waters is the fact that they are divided into two completely distinct areas by the peninsula of Denmark. The political grouping of the European Powers rendered it clear that in case of war Germany would have to face both east and west. As a corollary, therefore, to the growth of the German Navy there followed the necessity of being able to transfer it at will between the North and Baltic Seas. This was effected by the construction of the Kiel Canal, which, in 1914, was widened so as to admit the largest battleship. The strategic advantage thus conferred on Germany was very great. Not only was she enabled to assemble her fleet east or west of the peninsula at will, but the opposing navies would perforce have to remain divided, for the passage from the North Sea to the Baltic, which implied navigation through the Great Belt and the Sound, would most probably be mined and thus rendered practically impassable for belligerent vessels.

Of naval bases the most important was Kiel—the Portsmouth of Germany—where there were several dockyards capable of turning out every class of ship. The coast line also between the Dutch and Danish frontiers, cut by bays and river mouths and screened by the chain of Frisian Islands, afforded magnificent facilities for naval bases which Germany had made good use of. In the centre

of the bight lies Heligoland, ceded by England in 1890 and since then very heavily fortified by the Germans, with an artificial harbour for torpedo craft, a powerful wireless station, and airship sheds. Close to the Dutch frontier is the estuary of the Ems, with the town of Emden. Emden was a base for torpedo craft, possessed over a mile of wharfage, and was connected with Wilhelmshaven by canal. That town was the principal German base in the North Sea and, as regards docks, was the most elaborately equipped dockyard in the world. On the Weser was an important dockyard and base for torpedo craft at Bremerhaven, while in the Elbe estuary Cuxhaven was the headquarters of the German mine-laying and mine-sweeping services. Powerful forts guarded the narrow channel leading thence to Brunsbuttel—the North Sea entrance of the Kiel Canal—where there were a strongly fortified coaling station and repairing base, with two large docks, while at the head of the estuary was the great city and dockyard of Hamburg with several large floating and other docks. The estuaries of both the Weser and the Elbe are networks of intricate channels among the sands requiring expert pilotage, and are thus in themselves a strong defence. There is further the screen of islands, on one of which—Borkum—was a strongly fortified shelter for torpedo craft, and another similar base was at Sylt off Schleswig. In the Baltic, in addition to Kiel, Germany had two large dockyards at Dantzig where war vessels of all kinds were built.

The Austrian Navy.—Although Austria was not pre-eminently a maritime nation the reputation of her navy stood high. The victory at Lissa over the superior Italian Navy in 1866 had attracted much attention at the time and had imbued the Austrian Navy with a well-justified confidence in its fighting value. In 1914 the navy formed

a small but highly efficient fleet, considerable attention having been devoted to it in recent years. Three Dreadnoughts were in commission, the *Viribus Unitis*, *Tegethoff*, and *Prinz Eugen*, each of 22,000 tons, mounting 12-inch guns and capable of steaming 21½ knots, while a fourth was under construction. In addition there were three battleships of the *Lord Nelson* class[1] and nine smaller battleships, making fifteen in all. Two old armoured cruisers, nine light cruisers, fifteen destroyers, and some sixty torpedo boats were also at disposal. The number of submarines available when war broke out is not clear, but it was somewhere between six and twelve. Austria possessed three main naval stations in the Adriatic —Pola, the headquarters of the fleet, Trieste, and the Hungarian port of Fiume—while an additional station had been established at Sebenico in Dalmatia. The personnel of the navy included 23,000 men. At the outbreak of war the bulk of Austria's navy was concentrated in the Adriatic, the chief exception being the cruiser *Kaiserin Elizabeth*, which was in the Far East.[2]

The French Navy.—Formerly the French Navy had held second place among the navies of the world, but its relative size had been gradually declining. At the outbreak of war it included twenty-one battleships, of which four—the *Courbet*, *Jean Bart*, *France*, and *Paris*—were of the Dread-

[1] The *Lord Nelsons* are battleships of 16,500 tons and 18½ knots, mounting four 12-inch, ten 9·2-inch, and thirty-six smaller guns.

[2] The figures for the German and Austrian Navies have been extracted from authoritative British sources. In *Taschenbuch der Kriegsflotten*, 1914–5, by Kapitänleutnant B. Weyer, the naval strength of the Central Powers at the outbreak of war is given as follows:

Germany—Battleships, 57; coast defence ships, 8; armoured cruisers, 16; small protected cruisers, 35; small unprotected cruisers, 13; torpedo craft, about 200; submarines, "a considerable number, which are England's terror."

Austria—Battleships, 16; armoured cruisers, 2; protected cruisers, 6; river gunboats, 6; torpedo craft, about 50; submarines, 12.

nought type. There were also, included in the twenty-one, six battleships of the *Lord Nelson* class, but of 18,000 tons apiece. The largest guns carried in these ten ships were of 12-inch calibre and the maximum speed was under 21 knots. In older battleships the French Navy possessed five pre-Dreadnoughts and a further six antiquated ships of little fighting value. Of recent years a marked tendency to restore the French Navy to its former relative position had been evident, and in addition to the ships above enumerated there were ten Dreadnoughts and super-Dreadnoughts under construction. Cruisers of various types amounted to thirty-two, of which six were powerful armoured vessels of 22 to 23 knots ; the chief weakness of the French Navy, however, was in light cruisers of modern pattern. Of destroyers there were roughly eighty, while the number of torpedo boats—a species of craft in which France had specialized—amounted to over one hundred and fifty. The French Navy was particularly strong in submarines, possessing fifty when war broke out. Many of these, however, were constructed to steam when working on the surface—a system which has not met with universal expert approval. A further twenty-six submarines were building. The geographical situation of France had necessarily imposed a division of her naval strength between the Atlantic and the Mediterranean ; but owing to the growth of the friendly understanding with England the French Navy had been gradually concentrated in the latter sea, where France was well supplied with naval bases. These comprised Toulon on the mainland, Ajaccio and Bonifacio in Corsica, as well as Algiers, Oran, and Bizerta on the North African coast. The personnel of the French Navy exceeded 70,000, a large proportion of the seamen class being recruited from the seaboard population of Brittany.

The Russian Navy.—When peace was signed in 1905, after the war with Japan, Russia found herself practically without a fleet. The problem of naval reconstruction was not, however, shirked. Money was freely voted and only time was required to enable Russia to regain her status as a naval power. Unfortunately by 1914 her programme was far from completion. The Russian Navy is divided into two completely separate fleets, that of the Baltic and the Black Sea, which must, therefore, be treated separately. In the Baltic were four battleships of the pre-Dreadnought type with a main armament of four 12-inch guns, but of poor speed; about a dozen cruisers; and a respectable force of destroyers and submarines. Eight Dreadnoughts and super-Dreadnoughts were, however, under construction, and the delivery of four of them, with a speed of 25 knots, was expected in the winter. The naval force in the Black Sea was even weaker than that in the Baltic, six old battleships, of which three were of little fighting value, forming the nucleus, while a couple of small cruisers, a score or so of destroyers, and seven submarines made up the total. For this fleet three Dreadnoughts were under construction in August, 1914.

The British Navy.—To a nation like the United Kingdom, largely dependent on imported food supplies, the maintenance of a powerful navy was literally a matter of life and death. The fact had for long been vaguely realized, but not until 1884 had the problem been seriously faced; and the impulse towards greater naval strength was certainly not diminished by the sight of the phenomenal growth of the German Navy. The aim of the British Government had then been to maintain a navy equal in strength to a combination of the two next strongest powers, with an additional factor of safety in the shape of a small reserve; and, though it had been a matter of ex-

treme difficulty to preserve this standard, the British Navy had managed to maintain a position of unquestioned pre-eminence. The opening years of the twentieth century had witnessed the introduction of many sweeping naval reforms, amongst which were prominent the removal of vessels of small fighting value, the withdrawal of squadrons from distant stations to ensure the maximum concentration in home waters, the formation of adequate reserves, and the introduction of the Dreadnought type of battleship. This type has several times been mentioned in dealing with the navies of Germany, Austria, France, and Russia, and a mention of its characteristics will not be out of place. The *Dreadnought* was a battleship, launched in 1906, of 17,900 tons and with a speed of 21 knots. Her most important feature, however, was her armament; for instead of carrying the bulk of her gun power in 6-inch and 9·2-inch weapons with a few larger guns of 12-inch calibre the *Dreadnought* mounted as many as ten of the latter guns, which constituted her main armament. She was thus " an all big-gun " ship, and her introduction into the fighting line practically revolutionized naval construction.

Of these Dreadnoughts, or super-Dreadnoughts, England possessed no less than twenty-seven, completed, or almost complete, on the outbreak of war, including two pre-empted from Turkey and one from Chile. The two largest were the *Warspite* and *Queen Elizabeth*, magnificent vessels of 27,500 tons, steaming 25 knots, and mounting an exceptionally large gun of 15-inch calibre, of which each ship carried eight. Fourteen other battleships carried guns 13·5 inches or more in calibre. The weakest unit in this powerful collection of ships of war was the original *Dreadnought*, although but eight years had passed since she had been the accepted model for the world—a striking testi-

mony to the progressive spirit of the British Admiralty.[1] No less remarkable were the battle-cruisers, of which England possessed a fleet of ten. The oldest and slowest of this batch—the *Invincible*, *Inflexible*, and *Indomitable* —were but seven years of age, had the fine speed of 25 knots and mounted an armament of eight 12-inch and sixteen 4-inch guns. The largest was the *Tiger*, launched in 1913, and almost completed. Her burthen was 29,000 tons, and she had eight 13·5-inch and sixteen 6-inch guns, with the remarkable speed of 31 knots. Next after these powerful ships came ten second-class battleships, all of which could steam 18 knots or more, and none of which was over eleven years of age. Behind these again were thirty older battleships, dating back in some cases to 1895 and forming a third class. These vessels would have been hopelessly outclassed in action with Dreadnoughts and super-Dreadnoughts, but they formed a valuable reserve, capable of intervening with effect in an engagement where Dreadnoughts might have fought each other to a standstill. Besides all these vessels enumerated above there were other battleships on the stocks, and the total number of battleships in commission, launched but not completed, and in process of construction reached the remarkable figure of eighty-four.

The British Navy was strong in cruisers, there being forty-six in commission, ranging from the *Edgar* of 7350 tons and 19 knots, built in 1893, to the *Minotaur*, *Shannon*, and *Defence* of the years 1908 and 1909, with a tonnage of 14,600 and a speed of 23 knots. To these must be added the light cruisers, of which there were the large number of seventy, the eight more modern of them being capable of 30 knots. Of destroyers there were between one hundred

[1] The weight of a broadside from the *Dreadnought* was 6,800 lbs.; that of the *Queen Elizabeth* 15,400 lbs.

and seventy and two hundred, but of modern torpedo boats there were but forty-seven. This class of vessel was obsolescent, and the most modern dated from 1909. In submarines the number probably exceeded one hundred, and seven old light cruisers had been transformed into mine-layers. Three monitors, the *Severn*, *Humber*, and *Mersey*, were pre-empted from Brazil. The mercantile marine and trawling fleet of England were capable of supplying a very large number of vessels as improvised armed cruisers and mine-sweeping craft. Of airships there were fifteen built or building, five of which, however, were of such small size as to have only a limited radius of action. A rigid airship of the Zeppelin type capable of 50 miles an hour was under construction, as were six others of non-rigid design.

The great bulk of the navy was concentrated in home waters, although imperial requirements necessitated the presence of a few squadrons in foreign waters. In the Mediterranean were three battle-cruisers, seven cruisers of different types, and a complement of torpedo craft and submarines. In Asia, on the East Indian and China stations, were a couple of battleships, some half-dozen cruisers, and other smaller vessels. In Australasian waters there were two small but powerful squadrons. Various cruisers and gunboats were stationed on the African and American coasts, while five cruisers were in the Western Atlantic. These squadrons have been included in the total numbers shown above.

As regards home bases for the support of the British Navy, the Napoleonic wars had resulted in the chief of them being sited on the south coast of England. The new menace across the North Sea had, however, the effect of bringing the east coast of Great Britain into greater prominence, and the growth of the German Navy was followed

by the construction of additional bases on what had now come to be the strategic coast line. Already in existence, at the outbreak of war, was the dockyard at Chatham for building and repairing all but the largest types of warships, and of recent years an artificial harbour had been constructed at Dover which was chiefly used as a headquarters for British torpedo craft. On the Firth of Forth, at Rosyth, a British repairing dockyard with three large docks had been commenced, but unfortunately it was not complete when war broke out; while further north at Cromarty was a commodious harbour, almost twenty miles long, the entrance to which was only one mile broad and was defended by batteries manned by Royal Marines. In addition to Dover, torpedo bases existed at Sheerness (where there was a dockyard for their repair), Harwich, the Humber, Rosyth, and Scapa Flow in the Orkneys; while naval air stations had been organized at the Isle of Grain, Felixstowe, Great Yarmouth, Dundee, Montrose, and Fort George near Cromarty.

The number of men actually serving when war broke out was, in round numbers, 151,000. To reinforce these there were three reserves available. The Royal Fleet Reserve, formed in 1900, consisted of seamen, stokers, and marines who had served in the Royal Navy and who, for a retainer, accepted the liability of recall. On the 1st January, 1914, the total strength of this reserve was just under 28,000. Next came the Royal Naval Reserve, consisting of officers and men of the mercantile marine and fishing industry, who received short terms of training in peace. Its strength on the above date was between 17,000 and 18,000. In 1910 the formation of a Trawler Section of the Royal Naval Reserve had been decided on —a far-seeing and most valuable decision in view of the important work which "mine-sweeping" was found to

demand. Lastly there came the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, consisting of men chiefly in civil life whose taste for the sea led them to undergo naval instruction in their leisure time.

The Japanese Navy. — Like the army, the navy of Japan had been tried in modern war and had emerged triumphant from the test. In August, 1914, Japan had three completed battle-cruisers of 27,500 tons and steaming 28 knots, and one other building. Of Dreadnoughts there were two, but four more were in varying stages of construction. In addition to her Dreadnoughts Japan had a large number of older battleships, four of them—the *Aki*, *Satsuma*, *Katori*, and *Kashima*—being of very powerful type, with a main battery of 12-inch guns, similar armament being mounted in eight others. There were four heavily armed ships amongst the cruiser class, each carrying four 12-inch guns, besides eleven of an older class, which had rendered excellent service in the Russian War. Of light cruisers there were nineteen. The torpedo flotilla was powerful and well trained and included fifty-two destroyers and thirty-three torpedo boats. The number of submarines was fifteen, and the personnel included 51,000 men.

CHAPTER V

EVENTS FROM THE 5TH–16TH AUGUST

Maps 5, 2, 6, 1, 4, 3.

Dislocation of the Armies on the Western Front.—On the Western Front the strategy of the two opposing Great Powers may be thus summarized. The Germans, standing on the defensive in Alsace, were bent on obtaining a decision by pivoting on Mont Donon and throwing forward their right wing over the Sambre and Oise, this movement being possibly assisted by a thrust in the neighbourhood of Verdun. The French on their part desired to assume an immediate offensive across the Franco-German frontier into Alsace and Lorraine. To carry out her plan of invading France, Germany had organized her forces into seven main armies varying from three to six army corps each in strength. Working from north to south their dislocation as originally ordered, or as modified in the opening phase of the campaign, was as follows :—

Army.	*Commander.*	*Objective.*
Ist Army.[1]	General von Kluck.	Brussels; thence to Lille and Tournai in order to outflank the Franco-British left. A detachment was to mask Antwerp.
IInd Army.	General von Bülow.	Namur: Charleroi: Maubeuge.
IIIrd Army.[2]	General von Hausen.	Givet.
IVth Army.	Duke of Würtemberg.	Mézières-Sedan-Montmedy.
Vth Army.	German Crown Prince	Longwy; thence to Verdun, which was to be invested.
VIth Army.	Crown Prince of Bavaria.	The rôle of this army was apparently defensive, the safeguarding of Lorraine[4] being entrusted to it.
VIIth Army.[3]	General von Heerigen.	This army's task was also primarily defensive, its sphere of operations being Alsace.[4]

[1] Acting as an advanced guard to this army was the so-called Army of the Meuse under General von Emmich, composed of units partially mobilized, whose object it was to cross the frontier on the expiration of the ultimatum to Belgium and to seize Liége by an *attaque brusquée*.

[2] This army was formed from troops detached from the Duke of Würtemberg's Army during the initial stages of the advance and took its title (IIIrd Army). The original IIIrd, IVth, Vth, VIth therefore became the IVth, Vth, VIth, VIIth Armies.

[3] On the left of this army were detachments under General von Deimling.

[4] These two armies, however, took the offensive at Nancy before the end of August. See text *passim*.

The French Armies were at this period disposed in the following manner :—

Army.	*Commander.*	*Disposition.*
1st Army .	General Dubail.	Along the Vosges from Switzerland to Mont Donon.
2nd Army .	General Castelnau.	From Mont Donon to Pont-à-Mousson.
3rd Army .	General Ruffey.	Woevre; facing the German fortified line Metz-Thionville.
4th Army .	General Langle de Cary.	Along the Franco-Belgian frontier; from about Dun, on the Meuse, to Maubeuge.
5th Army .	General Lanrezac.	

As regards the Belgian field army its normal distribution was in accordance with the conformation of the frontier line, viz. the First Division at Ghent, the Second at Antwerp, the Third at Liége, the Fourth at Namur, the Fifth at Mons, the Sixth and the Cavalry Division at Brussels. Thus from whatever point an attack might come, an equal fraction of the Belgian forces, acting as an advance guard, was ready to meet it and to cover the concentration of the whole army towards the point of attack. The disposition of these forces over the whole kingdom was in perfect accordance with the principle of the country's neutrality.

The Germans capture Liége.—The decision of the German General Staff to advance through Belgium necessitated the capture of Liége in order to secure the crossing of the Meuse at that city, and to utilize the main line of railway from Germany to Belgium which crossed the river

at that point. Liége was a second-class fortress of the well-known ring type, the ring consisting of six large works and several smaller ones, with field entrenchments connecting them. The total number of guns is stated to have been 400, the largest being howitzers of 6-inch calibre.

When the German troops crossed the eastern frontier the Belgian Third Division at Liége became the advance-guard, which had to cover the concentration of the army jointly with the Cavalry Division. The Royal Government appealed to the guaranteeing Powers, and the First, Second, Fifth, and Sixth Divisions were ordered to move towards Liége and its environments. This move began on August 4th and finished on August 6th, and the army, united under the command of the King, became ready for every eventuality. The position that was chosen stretched, generally speaking, along the line Aerschot—Namur; its front was, however, too long to be held securely by four divisions. Only its northern half was held by Belgian troops, as it was hoped the French troops might arrive in time to fill up the gap between the Belgian line and the Meuse. The position covered the capital for the time being, and assured, if this should become necessary, the retreat of the army on Antwerp. The fundamental principles adopted by the Belgian commander-in-chief, were, briefly speaking: to resist wherever possible; to avoid the crushing of the army by greater numbers in order to keep it intact for joint action with the French and British forces; and to engage meantime the enemy wherever the intervention of the Belgian army might relieve or facilitate the task of the Allied armies.

Towards midnight of the 4th-5th August a preliminary bombardment against the eastern forts of Liége was begun by the Germans. Though the fire was extremely accurate it was quite unable to overcome the heavy guns

of the fortress, for only field artillery was employed by the Germans, their siege pieces not having yet come up. Towards dawn a vigorous attempt was made to rush the defences, but was repulsed with very heavy loss. On the 5th an emissary was sent under a flag of truce to the commander of the garrison to demand free passage, and on receiving a categoric refusal the Germans immediately resumed the attack on the eastern forts. This attack was repulsed with enormous losses to the attacking forces. Nevertheless they attempted in the following night a similar attack on the southern forts, with the same result. Meantime German cavalry and infantry outflanked the position north and south. The moment had now arrived when it was necessary to order the Belgian Third Division to fall back on the main body of the army if it was intended to save it. This move to the rear was carried out successfully on August 6th and 7th, and henceforth the forts were only capable of that passive resistance which resulted from their armaments. During the 7th the siege train of the Germans came into line and the bombardment was continued with these heavier pieces, but although they were masters of the town by the 10th it was not until three days later that the forts were overwhelmed and Liége fell. The delay imposed on the Germans by the defenders of the fortress was invaluable to the Allies, for it was of vital importance to the Germans to fall upon the left of the French armies before the arrival of reinforcements from England. In this hope they were destined to disappointment. The resistance of Liége had not only held in check three German corps, but had forced another corps to suspend its advance on Maubeuge. The incident serves to illustrate the value of defence works that are somewhat out of date, for the purpose of retarding the advance of a hostile army until this can bring up heavy ordnance to batter the parapets

The Germans checked north and south of Liége.—Meanwhile German cavalry had been pressing on above and below Liége. To the south Huy was occupied on the 10th by advanced guards of the German IInd Army. To the north the right of the cavalry of the Ist Army came into contact with the Belgian Cavalry Division at the village of Haelen on the 12th, and although the Germans made a determined effort to rush the bridges with the infantry which was supporting the cavalry, the attempt was beaten back, and a charge by the Belgian cavalry completed the rout. Next day Tirlemont was likewise attacked by some 2000 German cavalry, but the effort was shattered by the fire of the Belgian infantry. These exploits roused immense enthusiasm in Belgium and caused the most optimistic ideas to be entertained, though in reality they were but mere skirmishes and could exert no real influence on the invasion.

During this time the German IIIrd Army had been marching almost due west across the Ardennes. The advance had purposely been made slow until the fall of Liége should open the way for the great German enveloping movement. On the 15th advanced troops had reached the town of Dinant, eighteen miles south of Namur, which was held by a small force of French infantry, aided by artillery. An impetuous attack was delivered by the Germans early in the morning, but during the afternoon French reinforcements arrived and the attackers were driven off. Two days earlier the German IVth Army had reached Neufchâteau. The Vth Army, under the Crown Prince, had not yet arrived at its initial objective, the small fortress of Longwy.

Operations in Alsace-Lorraine.—Working from north to south the story of the fighting passes now from Belgium to the Franco-German frontier. On August 7th the French

decided to make a raid into Alsace towards Mulhausen, and troops from the 7th Corps from Belfort crossed the frontier, occupying Mulhausen the following evening amid great demonstrations of popular enthusiasm. The object of the raid was to detain as large a force as possible of Germans in Alsace pending the arrival of the British Army in the theatre of war. It was, however, feebly carried out, and on the following day large German forces, coming from the direction of Colmar and Neu Breisach, threatened the communications of the French and compelled them to fall back. The French general was immediately relieved of his command and the task had to be begun afresh. It was now decided to act on a larger scale. On the 10th August the French mobilization was completed, and, since the general situation in France and Belgium appeared satisfactory to the French Government, the two French armies facing Alsace and Lorraine were directed to initiate a general offensive from the line Belfort—Nancy. For five days the main effort was directed to seizing the passes of the Vosges Mountains on the frontier of Alsace, and to penetrating into Lorraine where the French 2nd Army had been more successful. Beginning with the occupation by French cavalry of the towns of Vic and Moyenvic on the 6th August the French had followed up their success by routing an army corps of the German VIth Army, and part of the Strassburg garrison, near Cirey on the 15th. The Germans retaliated by assuming the offensive from Metz on the 11th and 12th, in neither of which attempts, however, were they successful. On the 14th August the second French effort against Mulhausen was auspiciously begun, and everywhere in this region Fortune smiled upon the French.

The British Expeditionary Force lands in France.—In England the Government had decided to render France

military assistance, and mobilization had been proceeding with marked smoothness and precision. On the 5th August Lord Kitchener was appointed Secretary of State for War, and on the following day Parliament passed a vote of credit for £100,000,000, and sanctioned an increase to the army of half a million men. The railways were taken over by the Government, and on the 7th August the embarkation of the Expeditionary Force began. On the 12th England showed her whole-hearted adhesion to the Triple Entente by declaring war on Austria.[1] Two days later Field-Marshal Sir John French landed at Boulogne and proceeded to Paris, where he conferred with the President and General Joffre, the commander of the French forces. On the 16th August the British Expeditionary Force, consisting of the First, Second, Third, and Fifth Divisions, First Cavalry Division, and 19th Infantry Brigade, completed its debarkation at the northern ports of France. The Fourth and Sixth Divisions still remained in the United Kingdom. The disposition of the British force in France was at first as follows :—

First Corps—General Haig. First and Second Divisions ; Headquarters, Wassigny.

Second Corps—General Smith-Dorrien. Third and Fifth Divisions ; Headquarters, Nouvion.

Cavalry Division—General Allenby. Headquarters, Maubeuge.

Nineteenth Infantry Brigade—On Lines of Communication.

The Russians invade East Prussia.—To turn now to the Russo-German frontier two German corps had been sent to East Prussia to assist the three already stationed there.

[1] France had declared war on Austria on the 10th.

The Russian mobilization had progressed at a rate quite unexpected by the Germans, and during the first week in August the Russians were ready to strike a blow. It was decided to invade East Prussia with two armies operating at a distance from each other, called respectively the Army of the Niemen, under General Rennenkampf, and the Army of the Narev, led by General Samsonov. On the 7th August the former army crossed the frontier on the line Wirballen—Suwalki, moving in a north-westerly direction, driving in the German frontier detachments; these fell back, burning villages and destroying roads to delay the invaders. On Sunday the 16th August General Rennenkampf had got as far as Gumbinnen where the Germans had fortified a defensive position to cover the important railway junction of Insterburg some ten miles further west. Meanwhile General Samsonov, who had crossed the frontier on the widely extended front Lyck—Soldau on the 5th, had been steadily advancing northward, damaging the railways south of the Masurian lakes and driving back such German forces as he came in contact with.

Working southwards along the frontier line which divides Germany from Poland there was a hiatus along the strip on to which the Prussian province of Posen abuts. The Russian armies in this sector had not mobilized with the rapidity which characterized the Armies of the Niemen and the Narev, and the German strategy favoured a flanking movement rather than a direct advance. No serious operations took place during August in this region, but opposite Silesia the Germans consolidated their hold on the south-east angle of Poland.

Operations on the Austro-Polish Frontier.—The Austro-Polish frontier was, however, the scene of important fighting. The mobilization machinery of Austria was

superior to that of Russia; and in the ability to concentrate her troops, when mobilized, she also held the advantage, thanks to a network of railways admirably sited from a strategic point of view and of excellent construction. Galicia possessed two main parallel lines of railroad to the frontier, one passing through Cracow, Jaroslav and Lemberg, to Tarnopol, where it was joined by the other line from the south of the Carpathians. This double advantage favoured an Austrian offensive and rendered it possible for Austria to make a diversion to the Russian invasion of East Prussia by a vigorous attack against the front Warsaw—Brest-Litovsk. The bulk of the Austro-Hungarian troops were destined for this task and were formed for the purpose into three armies, the Ist under General Dankl on the left, the IInd under General Auffenberg on the right, with the IIIrd Army commanded by the Archduke Joseph Ferdinand in second line; these armies were to advance northwards through the region contained within the Vistula and the Bug. The movement was not without danger, for its execution would leave both flanks in the air, particularly to the east where the Austrian attack might be taken in flank or reverse by armies from south-west Russia.

In Southern Poland the Russians were not in a position to place large masses of men in the field earlier than the first week in September, for most of the troops mobilized at Vilna and Warsaw were destined for East Prussia, and a delaying force was all that was first available. On the other hand, from the military districts of Kieff and Odessa, which were comparatively rich in communications, a respectable force could be moved forward towards Galicia. As regards operations against Austria, Russia was, therefore, practically bound to the defensive in Southern Poland while able to attack in Galicia, a situation which was exactly

reversed for the Austrians and presented a certain analogy with the situation of the French and Germans in Belgium and Alsace-Lorraine. Early in August the Austrians took the offensive. Three armies on either side were involved. On the Austrian side the Ist Army based on Przemysl was told off for the invasion of Poland, supported on its right by the IInd Army, and having the IIIrd in reserve on the right rear. The 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Russian armies were completing their mobilization and moving out from Brest-Litovsk, Rovno, and Kieff.[1] On August 10th the Austrian Ist Army crossed the frontier heading due north, and came in contact with the advanced guards of the Russian 1st Army which were driven back; the Austrians continued their advance to the line Krasnik—Zamosc. But their victory was discounted by the movement of the Russian 2nd Army which advanced into Galicia and utterly defeated an Austrian detachment at Sokal on the 14th August. This portion of the theatre of war presents, therefore, the spectacle of each of the contending forces invading the territory of the other at the same time.

The campaign in Servia.—Operations were in progress on such a gigantic scale elsewhere that the fighting between Austria and Servia is almost in danger of being overlooked. Nevertheless a strenuous campaign was being waged in this focus of hostilities. The Servian forces were protected on the left by the troops of Montenegro who had thrown in her lot with her neighbour against the common enemy. The Austrians had five army corps along the frontier, and with portions of these forces endeavoured, but without success, to force the passage of the Danube and the Save between the 4th and the 7th August. On the 12th a mixed Servian and Montenegrin force advanced into Bosnia and occupied a few of the border villages, and on the same day the

[1] Austria formally declared war on Russia on the 5th August.

Austrians began the invasion of Servia in earnest with their whole available five corps. Two courses were open to Austria: either to penetrate into Servia by the valley of the Morava, which led directly into the heart of the country, so as to cut off Belgrade from Nisch; or, using the Drina as a base, to operate from west to east. The first course was open to the objection that it would expose the flanks of the invading army to enterprises by the Servians; by the second plan the Austrians would be enabled to rest their left flank on their own territory while securing safety for their right by almost impassable mountains. The advantages of the latter course were so marked that it was chosen, although against it was the fact that the terrain to be crossed was peculiarly rugged and therefore favoured the defence. As regards the Servians, their initial policy was one of defence and of preparation for any eventuality; and, acting on these lines, the frontier was watched by militia troops, behind which were reinforcing detachments as a tactical reserve. The object of these bodies of troops was to delay the advance of Austrian columns and to give time for the main field army to manœuvre. That force was posted in the vicinity of Aranguelovatz, half-way from the two most likely theatres of operations, ready to move to either with the minimum of delay. It was divided into three armies under Marshal Putnik.

On the 12th August the Austrians crossed the Drina with four corps (the fifth being left to observe the Montenegrins), and on the 15th the left wing had established itself at Shabatz. But Servian cavalry, reinforced by artillery and light infantry, drove back an Austrian column across the Drina, with the result that the Austrian corps concentrated at Shabatz was separated from the other Austrian troops operating in the mountains to the south. Such was the position on the 16th August in the

battle of the Iadar, as the operations of that time between Zvornik and Shabatz are called.

Naval operations.—The outstanding feature of the naval operations for the period under review is the fact that the German High Sea Fleet declined to put everything to the hazard and remained in port. Those persons, therefore, who had looked forward to a Trafalgar in the North Sea were doomed to disappointment. Some minor incidents have, however, to be recorded. On the 5th August the German minelayer *Königin Luise* was sunk by destroyers off the east coast of England. The following day the British light cruiser *Amphion* struck a mine and foundered. On the 9th the Germans experimented with the novel form of warfare afforded by submarines by attacking a light cruiser squadron of the Grand Fleet. This was the First Light Cruiser Squadron, which was at the time cruising about forty miles east of Aberdeen. The attack seems to have been rather unpremeditated, for one of the German submarines, the U15, rose only a short distance ahead of the *Birmingham*. Three rounds sufficed to disable the under-water craft whose fate was sealed by the light cruiser's ram. Three days later the British Admiralty issued an official statement to the effect that twenty-four British cruisers besides some French were searching for eight German light cruisers known to be in the Atlantic. In the Mediterranean a flutter of interest was provided by the movements of the German cruisers *Goeben* and *Breslau*. These vessels, after bombarding Bona and Philippeville on the coast of Algiers on the 4th, had put in to Messina on the 5th August. At five o'clock on the evening of the 6th they put to sea, and, eluding a British squadron, arrived at Constantinople on the 10th. On the 13th it was stated that the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* had been sold

to the Turkish Government. In Far Eastern waters the German squadron, based upon Tsing-tao,[1] left that port on August 6th—to reappear later and to meet its fate in South American waters. On the 16th August Japan presented an ultimatum to Germany demanding the surrender of Kiao-chau with a view to its ultimate restitution to China.

Summary to the 16th August.—By the 16th August Germany had been at war just over a fortnight. In that time she had taken one Belgian fortress, but at the cost of eight days' delay. France was acting on the offensive and had gained a footing in her lost province of Alsace. Russian columns were operating in East Prussia, the very home of Prussian junkerdom, and had penetrated into Austro-Hungarian territory. England had thrown the immense weight made up of naval power, colossal wealth, and vast potential military resources, into the scale against Germany, and, even at this early stage, was maintaining her claim to be mistress of the seas. Italy had stood aside from the Triple Alliance. Japan had practically seized Germany's cherished possession Kiao-chau, and by August 10th the whole of southern Togoland in West Africa was in the hands of the Allies. It was too early yet to frame an accurate prophecy of the issue of the contest, but one thing was clear. Germany was not to enjoy a mere walk-over in the great European War.

[1] Tsing-tao is the port of the German leased territory of Kiao-chau. Owing to the comparative unimportance of the incidents in Far Eastern waters during the Marne campaign no map has been included to illustrate them.

CHAPTER VI

EVENTS FROM THE 17TH–24TH AUGUST[1]

Maps 5, 2, 1, 6, 4.

THE week which opened on the 17th August, 1914, was marked by great events, and, in order to attain a comprehensive survey of them, an arbitrary division of the theatre of war is required. A convenient plan will be to commence with Alsace, and, working northward, to follow the course of operations through Lorraine, the Ardennes, Belgium, and North-East France. Then to turn to East Prussia, Southern Poland, Servia, and the war at sea.

The French severely defeated at Morhange.—In the preceding chapter the initial stages of the second French offensive in Alsace were referred to. This offensive had started on the 14th August and was successfully carried out; the French recaptured Mulhausen and re-occupied several villages in the immediate neighbourhood.

Linked with this offensive were the operations of the French 2nd Army, the assembly of which was completed round Nancy by the evening of the 18th. Opposite to it lay the German VIth Army, operating from Saarburg, with the VIIth Army on its left. As a result of the distinct successes he had already gained the French commander determined to deal a swift stroke against the enemy with the hope of bringing off a decisive victory. He was, however, ill-served by his intelligence

[1] For convenience the Belgian sortie from Antwerp (25th August) is described in this chapter.

department, and the wooded nature of the country hindered his aviators. On August 20th the French found themselves in front of Morhange, about fifteen miles across the frontier, with a line extending from the Seille to a point south of Saarburg. The main attack was pushed home with great vigour against the centre of the German VIth Army at Morhange, the French infantry displaying the utmost spirit and *élan*. A formidable system of entrenchments had, however, been prepared and the German machine guns wrought fearful execution, literally mowing down the attacking infantry in swathes. Before this outburst the French hesitated, recoiled, and finally broke. The shattered divisions of the 15th Corps, which had got too far in advance of the 20th Corps on the left and the 16th on the right, retired in confusion, followed in hot haste by the Germans,

General de Castelnau was forced to order the retirement of his whole army and fell back to a defensive position east of Nancy.[1] The withdrawal of the 15th and 16th Corps revealed the severity of the ordeal to which these troops had been exposed. "Infantry of the line, chasseurs, artillery, young men of the Active Army, Territorials, troops of peasants, women and children and old men, some in carts and some on foot, all mixed up in inextricable confusion with the soldiers and regimental wagons, the drivers flogging their worn-out horses in the vain effort to make them move faster, the men on foot, almost as many of them wounded as not, too tired or too weak to get out of the way, marching anyhow without any formation or any attempt to keep to their own companies, splashing along in a slough of mud, wet to the bone by the ceaseless rain, without discipline, without courage, almost without thought, the tragic procession filed slowly by, away from the

[1] The Germans claim to have taken 12,000 prisoners and 50 guns.

enemy, away from the frontier they had been sent to defend."[1]

In sympathy with this retirement the French 1st Army to the south had to swing back its left and abandon several passes on the Vosges. The Germans hurried forward reinforcements and within a few days of the battle of Morhange their front ran almost north-west and south-east from Etain, past Nancy and to the west of it, through Lunéville to the Col du Bonhomme. Very severe fighting took place in the Mt. Donon—Col du Bonhomme—Gerbéviller triangle, but the French 1st Army was able to prevent the enemy penetrating eastwards between Epinal and Toul. At the same time, upon the left, the 2nd Army was fighting a strenuous battle on the Grand Couronné de Nancy. Encouraged by his success the commander of the German VIth Army resolved to push on and capture Nancy, which is a road and railway junction of extreme importance. The position occupied by the French was, however, formidable. It lay along a chain of hills surrounding Nancy, known as the Grand Couronné, and consisting of considerable heights which are well wooded and noticeable for their terraced character. Reinforcements were available in the fortress of Toul, and the shattered regiments which had fled at Morhange quickly recovered their *moral*. On the 23rd began the three weeks' battle which was to supplement the struggle on the Marne and, like it, to end in the discomfiture of the invaders.

Change in the French plan.—The German advance through Belgium and the fall of Liége compelled a modification of the original French plan, and by the middle of August the line had to be thrown forward into Belgium. The French 3rd Army quitted its position facing Metz, and closing to its left, took up the general line Conflans—

[1] Gerald Campbell, *Verdun to the Vosges*.

west of Longwy—Tintigny, while the 4th Army carried on the front thence to Paliseul. Beyond that town, on the other side of a gap in which was the fortress of Givet, the right flank of the 5th Army now lay at Dinant ; its centre reached nearly to Namur and its left, sharply refused, bore westwards along the River Sambre to beyond Charleroi. The British troops were ordered to prolong this line through Mons ; and further still to the west the left flank was to be protected by French Territorial troops from Arras, Lille, and Tournai. A cavalry corps of three divisions near Maubeuge was to act as a reserve to this flank. The sharp salient at Namur in the very region where the enemy had revealed his strength created a weak section in the French line, but the situation was practically forced upon the French, for the Belgian Field Army had, as already stated, been unable to fill the whole line Aerschot—Namur to which it had fallen back, and the line of the Sambre was a necessary preliminary for the French in their effort to join hands with the Belgians. The danger of the very marked salient was minimized by the fortress of Namur, but events were to show that confidence in the resisting power of fortresses was unwarranted.

On the 20th August the assembly of the French armies was complete, and the German plan, as envisaged at that date, appeared to be as follows : Seven to eight army corps and four cavalry divisions were endeavouring to pass between Givet and Brussels and even to prolong their movements more to the west. The disaster at Morhange on that date had put an end to any hope of a successful French offensive in Alsace and Lorraine, and General Joffre's new plan was now to hold and dispose of the enemy's centre, and afterwards, using Namur as a pivot, to throw every available man against the right flank of

the German grouping of troops in the north.[1] General Joffre accordingly issued orders for the French centre and left to pass to the offensive. The centre consisted of the 3rd and 4th Armies, and it is to their doings that the story now turns.

Defeat of the French 3rd and 4th Armies.—The German Vth Army, under the Crown Prince, had by now invested the small fortress of Longwy and was preparing to force the passage of the Chiers when, in accordance with the French general plan, the French 3rd Army moved out to meet it. The line of the German Vth Army was prolonged on the right by the IVth. On the 21st the French advanced with the dash and *élan* which characterize their tactics, but the German machine guns brought their efforts to a complete standstill, and the French 3rd Army was driven back. The left of the French centre formed by the 4th Army had not been able even to initiate the offensive ordered, for the German IIIrd Army had anticipated such action. On the 22nd General von Hausen forced the passage of the Meuse south of Namur with two corps, and on Sunday 23rd launched another corps against Dinant from the eastern bank, the two corps which had already crossed co-operating by pushing southwards on the opposite side of the river. With its left now uncovered the French 4th Army was unable to offer any effective resistance, and that flank was forced back towards Mézières.

The complete failure of this offensive, the prelude of the advance of the Allied left wing, was a serious blow to the French. The reasons for it, as given in French official accounts, were varied. There were individual and collective failures, imprudences committed under the fire of the enemy, divisions ill-engaged, rash deployments and pre-

[1] The German right flank now held the line Hal—Eghezee—Liége and the country south-west of Brussels.

cipitate retreats, a premature waste of men, and finally inefficiency in the care of certain troops both infantry and artillery. In consequence of these errors the enemy, turning to account the difficult terrain, was able to secure the maximum profit from the situation.[1]

The fall of Namur.—The inability of the French 4th Army to deal with an attack which necessitated the enemy operating astride of a river was due largely to the unexpected collapse of Namur. The speedy downfall of this powerful fortress came with something of a shock to military experts who had seen the protracted resistance of Belfort and Port Arthur. The city of Namur occupies a commanding position in the angle formed by the confluence of the Rivers Meuse and Sambre, and its defensive perimeter consisted of a ring of four large and five smaller forts mounting some 350 pieces. These forts lay at a distance of from two and a half to five miles from the city and were on the average about two and a half miles distant from each other. The garrison consisted of fortress troops and the Belgian Fourth Division, which had concentrated at Namur on the conclusion of the Belgian mobilization; the latter troops were employed before the attack in clearing the foreground, creating obstacles, and in constructing entrenchments between the forts.

Profiting by their costly experience of Liége, the Germans did not bring their infantry in masses to the attack, but kept them to repel any sortie by the garrison, while the whole of the real business was done by the heavy siege train. Included in this were howitzers of 28 and 42 centimetre calibre. The first shots were fired on the evening of August 20th, the fire being directed chiefly against the north-eastern sector of the enceinte. Every one of the

[1] See *The French Official Review of the First Six Months of the War*, Chapter I.

forts attacked received a shell every thirty seconds, and all night long the bombardment continued with exceeding accuracy. During the night one fort blew up, and when morning broke several more were in ruins. All through the 21st the cannonade continued with even increasing violence, and by dawn of the 22nd it was clear that the end was not far off. Some 5000 French troops arrived during the morning, but too late to be of any real assistance, for the Belgian infantry had already fallen back from the entrenched line between the forts. The commander of the garrison now realized that the hour had come to evacuate the fortress if he wished to save the remnant of the Fourth Division. The retreat was attended with great difficulty, for no arrangements had been made for a possible evacuation and considerable confusion prevailed. Two regiments of infantry forced their way through the line of the invaders south of the city and managed to reach French territory, and, making their way to Rouen, embarked for Ostend, whence they proceeded to Antwerp. To that city about 12,000 survivors in all managed to escape. On the 24th the Germans entered the city. One of the forts to the west was still feebly firing next day till it was smothered by 1300 shells, and by the morning of the 26th the last vestige of resistance had been suppressed.

The Battle of Charleroi. Defeat of the French 5th Army.—While Namur was being overwhelmed the French 5th Army holding the Sambre to the west of it had been overwhelmed by the German IInd Army. A desperate battle was waged during the whole of the 22nd and the morning of the 23rd, resulting in the complete overthrow of the French, the capture of Charleroi, and the seizure of the river crossings on the Sambre by the Germans. The 5th Army held the line of the River Sambre with its right south of Namur, in touch with the Belgian garrison of the

fortress; its centre at Charleroi; and its left in the vicinity of Thuin. The outposts had been pushed out as far as Gembloux and Perwez, which latter place was the point of union of the French and Belgian field armies, but German columns of the IInd Army under General von Bülow had struck against these advanced troops and had driven them in upon the Sambre. On the 22nd the Germans made a most vigorous attack on Charleroi, opening the day with a bombardment of the railway station, which was soon in ruins. General Lanrezac, the commander of the 5th Army, had, however, determined to take the offensive with the two corps of African troops[1] which formed the left centre, and in spite of the numbers of the enemy opposed to them these troops with their traditional bravery issued from the town and charged the enemy's guns with the bayonet. An engagement of the most bloody and desperate nature ensued, in which the Prussian Guards were very severely dealt with and had to give way, while one battalion of Turcos actually reached a German battery and bayoneted the gunners by their guns. The German retirement was, however, only temporary, and the arrival of reinforcements from the IIIrd Army soon placed them in a position of immense numerical superiority. So that the Prussian Guards, advancing in parade formation and with indomitable bravery, were able to regain the lost ground and even to take many hundred prisoners. The French resisted with the greatest obstinacy, but their artillery support was poor, and foot by foot the Germans, heedless

[1] Though some French accounts speak of these two corps of "African troops" it is not clear which corps are referred to. The only corps usually quartered in Africa was the 19th, including Zouaves (white troops) and Turcos (Algerian Native Infantry). In addition, however, there were Senegalese and Moorish battalions formed in separate divisions, and also a Tunisian Division, and several reserve divisions of Zouaves from all of which a corps may have been formed. The troops immediately opposite Charleroi were a division of Turcos.

of enormous losses, reached the outskirts of Charleroi. This sanguinary struggle lasted all the 22nd and was renewed with equal bitterness on the following day. At last after a bombardment of intense violence the invaders set foot in the city. Every street became the scene of appalling slaughter and the Germans suffered very severe losses. The French fought with great tenacity, and during the two days' contest the town was lost and won by them no less than five times. The carnage was almost indescribable in the narrow streets between the canal and the Sambre, and in places the dead and wounded blocked the way to those who were still unscathed. Here and there the bodies of the slain formed ramparts from which sharpshooters kept up a murderous fire; and the Germans in their persistent advance marched on a pavement of corpses. "In the narrow streets the Germans pushed on in close order and the French guns made such havoc in their ranks that the air was so full of flying heads and arms and legs, of boots and helmets and swords and guns that it did not seem as if it could be real—'it looked like some burlesque.' Even one of the gunners turned ill and said to his commander who stood beside him, 'For the love of God, Colonel, shall I go on?' And the colonel with folded arms replied, 'Fire away.'"[1]

Soon portion of the town burst into fire and hundreds of wounded perished in the flames. It was at this time—early in the forenoon of Sunday the 23rd—that the French, supported at length to good effect by their artillery, recaptured the town for the fifth time,[2] but only to find that the Germans were outflanking them to the east, the

[1] This incident was related by a survivor of the battle to the authoress of *A Hilltop on the Marne*.

[2] According to some accounts the last French counterstroke took place on the evening of the 22nd. Very little is known of the exact details of the battle.

line having been pierced between Fosse and Namur. This success by the Germans decided the day. The French were forced to retire, although they did so foot by foot, protected by *rafales* of the 75's, and keeping the enemy off by repeated bayonet charges. The field pieces were supplemented by the guns of 155 millimetre calibre which fired with great rapidity and caused terrific losses to the Germans. At first the French fell back to a line running from Thuin, on the west, to Fosse, but the continually increasing numbers of the attackers, the havoc wrought by German heavy guns, and apparently the idea that the British had been driven back on the left led to the complete surrender of the Sambre and to undisguised retreat. So that while Sir John French was awaiting attack at Mons the French 5th Army, instead of being in position to support his right, was in full retirement towards the frontier.

The severity of the fighting and the extent of the defeat brought about a temporary paralysis in the staff arrangements of the French, with the result that no intimation of the battle or the consequent retirement had been communicated to the British commander on the left. This omission brought the British Army within an ace of irretrievable disaster, but before dealing with its doings, which have passed into history as the Retreat from Mons, it is necessary to review shortly what had been taking place in Belgium.

Operations of the Belgian Army.—The resistance of the fortress of Liége had delayed the German invading force for a clear week, but this was not all. The Belgian Field Army was still in being, and until it was dealt with the great German outflanking movement must necessarily be endangered. It will be remembered that the Belgian Field Army had originally taken up the northern portion of the line Aerschot—Namur, but on the fall of Liége a modification

of the front took place, the left flank being thrown forward and the right drawn back, the general line of the field armies then being Wavre—Tirlemont—Diest and north of that town.[1] The German Ist Army therefore was at once set in motion, and on the 14th forced back the Belgian left and struck at the rear guard at Aerschot, where a stubborn action was fought. Two days later the main body of the German Ist Army came in contact with the Belgian right at Wavre and attempted an enveloping movement which for the moment was checked. Brussels was now in obvious danger, and on the 17th the Belgian Government and the Royal Family left the city and proceeded to Antwerp. Two days later, by means of a sustained artillery fire the Germans pierced the Belgian front at Tirlemont and drove the defenders in confusion through Louvain, at the same time roughly handling a French cavalry force at Perwez which had been sent to join hands with King Albert's troops. The Belgian Army sought refuge behind the fortifications of Antwerp, while the French cavalry fell back to the heights between Mons and Charleroi.

Early in the morning of the 20th the advanced troops of the German Ist Army closed in upon the city of Brussels. No resistance was offered, for the Belgian Government had decided to spare the capital the horrors of battle, and the city had indeed been almost entirely evacuated during the preceding night. The conquerors behaved well and no untoward incident took place; but a war indemnity of £8,000,000 was imposed upon the city. One division of the Germans was left in Brussels and a force was detached

[1] The original line covered Brussels, but in view of the weight of the German advance it was decided not to expose that city to the hazard of battle. The modified line was intended to cover Antwerp, which was recognized to be the *reduit* of Belgium.

to watch the Belgian Army in Antwerp,[1] the remainder of the German Ist Army being put in motion south-westwards towards Mons. The German cavalry spread south and west, in the former direction coming to grips with British cavalry about Soignies, and in the west making an ineffectual effort to rush Ostend.

A Belgian Sortie from Antwerp.—The Belgian Army was still in being. Though it had suffered severely in the fighting of the past ten days its spirit was unbroken, and on Tuesday the 25th it delivered a sharp counterstroke against the invaders. It will be remembered that on the 23rd the French 5th Army had been driven back from Charleroi; and, to anticipate the story slightly, the Germans were engaged all the 23rd in a fierce attempt to annihilate the isolated British Army at Mons. It was the wish to relieve the terrible pressure on the latter that induced King Albert to strike. Emerging from Antwerp he drove the Germans from Malines and forced them back almost into Brussels, while on the right and left Belgian columns made themselves masters of Alost and Aerschot. This unexpected effort on the part of the Belgian, being a thrust against their communications, was a serious embarrassment to the Germans, augmented by the fact that 2000 British Marines landed at Ostend on the morning of the 24th.[2] Forced thus to front south, west, and north their position threatened to be one of imminent danger. This was averted by the prompt action of a German Reserve Corps, marching to reinforce the Ist Army, which was hurled against the Belgian advanced guard at Louvain, and brought the movement of King Albert's regiments to a standstill.

[1] Apparently at this time the German force detailed to watch Antwerp was only a division. On the 24th August the IIIrd Reserve Corps and IXth Reserve Corps took over the task.

[2] According to some accounts these Marines did not land until the 27th; but the 24th seems borne out by satisfactory evidence.

The British at Mons.—To revert now to the British Army. The country between Maubeuge and Mons had been assigned to Sir John French as his area of concentration, and by the evening of the 21st August such concentration was practically complete. During the 22nd the British troops were moved forward to a position upon the left of the French 5th Army. The position occupied had a front of about twenty-five miles, and the numbers available for its occupation were in round numbers about 75,000 men and 250 guns. The line ran along the canal from Condé on the west, past Mons, where the canal made a loop to the north, to Binche upon the east. From Condé to Mons inclusive was assigned to the Second Corps, the First Corps carrying on the line to the east. The front was covered by the Fifth Cavalry Brigade, units of which penetrated as far as Soignies, where several encounters with the enemy took place, while the remainder of the Cavalry Division was placed behind the left wing to act as a reserve. Further to the west the divisions of French Territorials which were to guard the left flank had not yet come up into line, except for a brigade at Tournai.

Although the general plan of the French generalissimo was an attack with his centre and left, the operations of the latter were to be contingent upon the success of the centre in "attacking and disposing of the enemy." The rôle of the British Army was, therefore, at first to be defensive, and accordingly on reaching the Mons position the men were set immediately to the task of entrenching the ground. At six o'clock on the morning of Sunday, August 23rd, Sir John French assembled his corps and cavalry divisional commanders to explain the French plan. The immediate situation at that moment was taken to be that the French 5th Army on the right was still in position; that little more than one—or at most two—

corps were in front of the British; and that no outflanking movement was being attempted by the Germans. Such conjecture, though warranted by all the information received, was really at variance with actual facts. The French 5th Army had been heavily attacked, and if not actually in retreat was soon about to retire. The great bulk of the German Ist Army had quitted Brussels and was streaming along the roads leading south-west from that city, while the IInd Army, which had been successfully engaged at Charleroi, was preparing to co-operate. The German plan was to outflank the British not only on one but on both flanks. In a word, the retreat of the French 5th Army on the right and the non-arrival of the French Territorials on the left was to cause the two British corps to form an isolated salient towards a German advance in greatly superior numbers.

Shortly before one o'clock the German artillery opened fire all along the British front, and it was soon apparent that the Germans had from five hundred to six hundred guns in action. Meanwhile the German infantry had been gradually working forward and rifle fire burst out all along the line. At first the main German effort was made with the IInd Army against the British right, the attack developing about three o'clock in the afternoon. The British First Corps was forced to refuse its outer flank and the Fifth Cavalry Brigade evacuated Binche, which was thereupon occupied by the Germans. As the afternoon wore on the fighting became more and more severe, and the German infantry, pressing on in successive waves in close formation, suffered heavy losses from the steady rifle and machine gun fire of the British. On the left of the British line heavy fighting took place at the canal crossings, which the British had kept in their hands to facilitate the advance which had originally been contemplated. But later, when

the enemy's superiority became manifest, orders were given to retire south of the canal, and bridge after bridge was successfully blown up by the defenders. On the other flank the First Corps had been slowly forced back to the rising ground south-west of Binche, thus exposing the right flank of the Second Corps holding the dangerous salient formed by the canal loop at Mons. The danger to that corps was quickly observed by Sir John French, who directed the corps commander not to keep his troops in the salient too long, but if seriously threatened to draw back the centre behind Mons.

It was now five o'clock. The battle had been stubbornly contested, and the British, though palpably outnumbered and out-gunned, had fought imbued with the belief that they were acting in unison with a strong French army on their right. They were soon to be undeceived, for a telegram was brought to the British commander-in-chief with unexpected and startling news. The despatch was from General Joffre announcing the defeat of the French 5th Army, the seizure of the passages of the Sambre by the Germans, and the enforced retirement of the defenders. Further disquieting information was included to the effect that at least three German corps were operating against the British front, while another was engaged in a turning movement from the direction of Tournai. A retirement in conformity with the French 5th Army on his right was now imposed upon the British commander-in-chief. Orders were promptly issued for the heavy transport to fall back; and late at night the troops, who had laid down to rest in the trenches convinced that they had won a victory, were roused with unexpected orders to commence retirement without delay.

The Russians victorious in East Prussia.—The story of the week's fighting must now be transferred to East

Prussia, where two Russian armies had been meeting with noticeable success. It will be remembered that the northern of the two armies under General Rennenkampf had struck against a German force which was making a stand at Gumbinnen, to cover the important railway junction at Insterburg, on the 16th August. On that day the Russian attack began and continued all through the next day, the Russians evincing a marked superiority in their artillery fire. On the 18th, after very severe fighting, the attackers gained possession of Gumbinnen, and, forcing the Germans steadily back, made themselves masters of the railway junction at Insterburg. Again was the battle renewed on the 19th, the Russians attacking heavily all along the line and endeavouring to turn the German left, and on the 20th the Germans abandoning their position fell back on Königsberg in considerable disorder. On the same day Tilsit was evacuated by the Germans, and General Rennenkampf could legitimately claim to have won an unquestioned victory, although oddly enough the defeated army seems to have taken a considerable number of prisoners.[1]

The action of the southern column under General Samsonov was no less auspicious. On the 20th the Russian advanced troops came upon the Germans entrenched about Frankenau, west of the Masurian Lakes, and after some fierce bayonet work drove in the right of the defenders. The Germans fled in great disorder, the bulk of their forces making for Königsberg hotly pursued by General Samsonov's cavalry. These two victories made the Russians practical masters of all East Prussia. Tilsit was quickly occupied and Russian cavalry patrols pushed on rapidly towards Danzig. The Germans claim to have countered by advancing and seizing Mlawa on the 18th August and

[1] According to a German source 8000 prisoners and 8 guns were taken. The figures are probably exaggerated.

to have pushed forward portion of the troops, which had entered Poland, as far as Petrokow on the 19th.

The Russian and Austrian Armies.—The account of the fighting in Southern Poland and Galicia, narrated in the last chapter, disclosed a tactical give-and-take, the Austrians invading Russian territory at one point while at another the situation was inverted. The same state of affairs continued during the week which closed on the 24th August. The Austrian Ist Army about Zamosc continued to drive back the Russian 1st Army towards the Bug, while further south the tables were turned. The Austrian IInd Army, which was covering Lemberg, stretched from a point about twenty miles north-east of that city to the Dniester; while on the other side the Russian 2nd and 3rd Armies, which were now in touch, were advancing from the line Sokal—Brody—Tarnapol with Lemberg as their objective. Some severe fighting between advanced troops took place in which the balance of advantage inclined towards the Russians.

The Servians defeat the Austrians.—The Austrians were not for long to enjoy the possession of Shabatz, which place, it will be remembered, they captured on the 16th August; for on the following day the Servians delivered an attack upon the Austrian corps which had seized the place and inflicted defeat upon it. On the 18th the Servians followed this up by attacking the other Austrian corps which had crossed the frontier from Bosnia and were now working up the Iadar valley with the object of rolling up the Servian left. These corps now fell back across the frontier, their losses being considerable. The main Servian forces then endeavoured to cut off the Austrians about Shabatz, whose position had become imperilled by the retirement of the corps upon their right. But the attempt failed owing to the work of the Austrian gunboats, and the

retreat across the river was successfully carried out. On the 24th August the last of the invaders were back across the Save and the victorious Servians gathered in 4000 prisoners, 50 guns, 150 ammunition wagons, and a large quantity of military stores. The Serbo-Montenegrin offensive against Sarajevo was now suspended and the troops fell back to the frontier, but the Servians could justly claim that they had punished their assailants and had forcibly ejected them from their country. The Austrian General Staff contented itself with the publication of a pompous and mendacious *communiqué* in which it stated that the heroism of the Austrian troops had shorn the Servian offensive of all the result and that the enemy had been left in a condition of utter weakness.

Naval operations.—The week was not distinguished by any particularly noteworthy incident so far as naval operations are concerned, although there was a certain liveliness in the North Sea, where German torpedo craft did some damage to the fishing industry. Some desultory fighting also took place between British patrolling squadrons and flotillas and German reconnoitring cruisers without loss on either side. To a certain extent mines dominated the situation, the laying of these machines being chiefly indulged in by the Germans, while the British Navy endeavoured to neutralize such activity by mine sweeping, for which purpose numbers of specially fitted trawlers were employed. Further afield the few German cruisers which were at large when war broke out had begun a policy of commerce destruction, the *Dresden* capturing and sinking a merchant steamer 180 miles east of Pernambuco on the 16th August.

Summary to nightfall of 23rd August.—A review of the week's operations by land falls naturally into two distinct subdivisions—a survey of the Western and Eastern Fronts

respectively. On the former the balance of advantage was unquestionably with Germany. Her successes were indeed far-reaching and unmistakable. The French 2nd Army had been badly defeated at Morhange, and the 1st Army had, in consequence, been swept off several passes in the Vosges; the 3rd and 4th Armies had been thrown back towards the Meuse; and the 5th Army had been almost overwhelmed on the Sambre. Further to the left the British Army had been heavily outnumbered, and forced to retire, at Mons. The Belgian Army had been shepherded into Antwerp and its gallant effort at a sortie was to be promptly stifled. Further, by the evening of the 23rd Namur was at its last gasp, and an obstacle which had been expected to impose serious delay to the invaders was about to pass into their hands. Unquestionably, on the Western Front it was Germany's round.

To a certain extent this condition of affairs was counterbalanced by the operations in the Eastern theatre. In Servia Austria had suffered a defeat, galling to her prestige and somewhat humiliating to a Great Power which had set out with considerable flourish of trumpets to chastise a little State. In Southern Poland the Austrian Ist Army had, indeed, won some minor successes and was driving the Russian 1st Army towards the Bug. But the Austrian IInd Army in Galicia was being threatened by the Russian 2nd and 3rd Armies, and Lemberg was in some peril. It was in East Prussia, however, that the legend of German invincibility was being most severely tested. One Russian army had gained a decided victory at Gumbinnen, while another had been scarcely less successful west of the Masurian Lakes. The German forces had in each case retired in some disorder, and by taking refuge in the fortress of Königsberg had tacitly admitted their present inability to stand up further in the field. These Russian

successes, besides being of supreme importance in a military sense, acquired a special prominence from the region where they were achieved. In a democratic country like England it is difficult to realize the effect produced by an invasion of East Prussia on an aristocratic kingdom like Prussia, and, in a lesser degree, on all Germany. The country squires of the eastern province formed the class from which the Prussian ruling and military caste recruited its most influential members, and so strong was the political influence of East Prussia that the military authorities could not possibly turn a deaf ear to cries for assistance emanating from that region, even if the necessities of strategy dictated otherwise.

The inevitable result of these considerations was that the Russian victories were overrated in Allied circles. The fact was overlooked that the Russian armies in East Prussia were in a position of decided peril. Not only were they operating from widely divergent bases, but they had penetrated into a region of immense tactical difficulty where a pathfinder's knowledge of the baffling lake and marsh country was an absolute essential to success. Nor was this all. The fortress of Königsberg constituted an extremely strong *reduit*, endowed with the inestimable advantage of being able to receive reinforcements and supplies by sea ; and of that sea—the Baltic—the Germans held almost absolute control. It was at this time that much optimistic talk of the " Russian Steam Roller " was heard. As a French writer drily put it : *Les journaux anglais n'hésitèrent pas à pronostiquer des résultats foudroyants.* The truth is that the Russians were deliberately incurring grave risk with the object of relieving pressure in France and Belgium ; and without belittling their success the opinion may be hazarded that so far as land operations as a whole were concerned—that is to say on the Eastern

and Western Fronts taken together—Germany had scored far more than her opponents.

The war, however, was not exclusively a land campaign ; and on the sea, although no Trafalgar or Tsu-shima had been fought, Germany had unquestionably been defeated. Save for local command in Baltic waters the mastery of the sea was definitely out of her hands. In the North Sea her High Seas Fleet had avoided encounter with the British Navy. As a result her overseas commerce was entirely suspended, the British Expeditionary Force had been transported across the Channel with consummate ease, and the Allies had the whole world open to them as a source from which to draw supplies. In the Mediterranean the situation was no different. The French Navy, aided by British squadrons spared from the North Sea, had penned up Austria in the Adriatic, and the transport of France's African troops had been undisturbed. In a word, so long as she submitted to such loss of sea control and to the fetters of blockade, Germany was to a large extent cut off from the outer world and had insensibly begun to occupy the position of a beleaguered fortress. Victorious operations on land might for a while conceal the fact ; but unless they were to be marked by dazzling success they might well be regarded by unprejudiced strategists as mere sorties.

CHAPTER VII

OPERATIONS FROM THE EVENING OF THE 23RD TO THE EVENING OF THE 31ST AUGUST

Maps 2, 1, 5, 6, 4, 3.

General Joffre's New Plan.—With the defeat of the Franco-British left the situation as it presented itself to the French commander-in-chief was as follows. Either the frontier would have to be further defended on the spot under conditions which had become extremely perilous, or a strategic retirement must be undertaken which, although necessarily yielding territory to the enemy, would permit the generalissimo to reorganize his troops and to resume the offensive at his own time. General Joffre decided upon the latter alternative. He might have chosen to dispute with the invader every inch of French territory, but the risks involved in giving battle with troops that required reorganization undoubtedly influenced him in his decision. He decided squarely to refuse battle both with his left wing and centre, and, while withdrawing these portions of the line, to carry out a fresh disposition of his forces which would transfer the centre of gravity of his line from east to west. On the 25th August he conveyed his views through the medium of an Army order, from which the following paragraphs are now reproduced :—

"The projected offensive not having succeeded, further operations will be carried out with a view to

the formation on our left (by a combination of the 4th and 5th Armies, the British Army, and fresh troops from the east) of a mass capable of retaking the offensive ; the remaining armies will contain the enemy as long as required."

The " fresh troops "—which subsequently became the 6th Army—are thus alluded to, and their mission thus described :—

" In the region of Amiens a new group will be created, made up of units brought by rail (7th Corps, four reserve divisions, and possibly another army corps of the first line) to assemble between the 27th August and the 2nd September. This force will be ready to take the offensive on the general line St. Pol—Arras, or Arras—Bapaume."

Henceforward French Headquarters devoted its efforts to preparing once again for the offensive. To this end three conditions had to be fulfilled. In the first place, the retreat was to be an orderly one, protected by a succession of counter-attacks which would keep the enemy busy. Secondly, the extreme limit of such retreat had to be so fixed that the different armies could reach it simultaneously, ready to assume a simultaneous offensive without delay. And thirdly, every circumstance permitting of a resumption of the offensive before this point should be reached was to be utilized by the whole of the retreating armies, French and British.

In the above orders is contained the germ of the dispositions from which grew the battle of the Marne. General Joffre seems to have underestimated the rapidity with which the right wing of the Germans would advance, for the line St. Pol—Arras—Bapaume was in their hands days before the nucleus of the new 6th Army (the 7th Corps) even

arrived at Amiens. The actual offensive had therefore to be deferred and the retreat prolonged further than had originally been contemplated. The battle of the Marne did not begin until the 6th of September, but it is of interest to note that as early as the 25th of August General Joffre had conceived the definite offensive plan which led up to it.

It is now necessary to tell the story of the events which followed on the collapse of the left and centre of the Franco-British forces. This chapter will carry on the story till the evening of the 31st of August and will work from left to right along the armies under General Joffre's command. Events in Belgium will then be described, and the chapter will close with a brief survey of such operations as took place on the Eastern Front and on the sea.

The German Out-flanking Movement in the West.—So soon as the British Army was forced to retire from its position at Mons, and the Belgian counterstroke from Antwerp had been nipped in the bud, the German right wing lost no time in pushing south-west with the object of cutting off the British from their bases at Boulogne and Havre. It will be remembered how at 5 p.m. on the afternoon of the 23rd, during the battle of Mons, an inkling of this movement had been conveyed to Sir John French in the telegram from General Joffre. The dispatch alluded to a turning movement by the German IInd Corps from the direction of Tournai,[1] and on the 24th the intelligence was amply borne out. On that day the German corps—which formed part of the German Ist Army under General von Kluck—covered by several cavalry divisions—attacked

[1] Tournai was entered by German cavalry patrols about noon on the 22nd and found unoccupied by French troops; but about 7 p.m. Territorial troops arrived by forced marches from Calvados in Normandy and expelled the enemy.

Tournai,[1] which was held by merely a brigade of French Territorials, and after some stiff street fighting surrounded the place, compelling the surrender of the defending force. The German mounted troops were at once set in motion again towards Lille ; but no defence of that fortress was attempted, and the place was immediately occupied by the invaders. The German cavalry now headed for Arras, while the IInd Corps was set in motion from Tournai towards Douai with the object of cutting in between the British Army and its advanced base at Amiens.

Arras and Douai gave but little trouble. But it must not be thought that the invaders were unmolested in their operations, for the French troops under General d'Amade, acting on the outer flank, kept the Germans busy from day to day by partial attacks.[2] South of Arras, near Bapaume, about a division of French Territorials composed of detachments driven back from the north were attacked by the Germans on the 29th or 30th. A really stiff fight ensued, the French troops holding their own with great obstinacy, but the German mounted troops swept round the French flanks and the situation became critical, until at length the French were enabled to extricate themselves from a difficult position.[3] On the 30th the German IInd Corps collided with the French again at Albert, and on the 31st the invaders were called upon to beat off an attack in the neighbourhood of Combles.

On that day Amiens fell. The French apparently were not outnumbered in troops, for, in addition to the Reserve

[1] According to some accounts this attack began on the 23rd.

[2] The French troops in this region were the 61st and 62nd Reserve Divisions and General Sordet's 1st Cavalry Corps. The latter force had moved to this flank during the battle of Le Cateau. See p. 97.

[3] According to some accounts the French were assisted by some British troops hurriedly dispatched from the lines of communication, but the story lacks authenticity.

Divisions of General d'Amade and the various Territorial detachments which were concentrating on the city, a portion of the new French 6th Army was on the spot; for the 7th Corps, which had been moved by rail from Alsace, had detrained on the 28th and 29th. The retention of the place was, however, no longer vital, for two or three days earlier the British had evacuated it and orders had been issued by Sir John French to change the base to St. Nazaire and to substitute Le Mans for Amiens as the advanced base. Further, on the 31st, the British Army, in full retreat, was well south of the line Compiègne—Soissons, so that Amiens was absolutely isolated. In these circumstances the complete evacuation of the place was a military necessity, and nothing further than a temporary check to the enemy could be hoped for. Throughout the forenoon of the 31st the 7th Corps kept closing on its right, which stood at Montdidier, and gained touch with the British cavalry near Lassigny. During the evacuation the approaches to the town were defended by Territorial infantry with a brigade of Senegalese Rifles in reserve, and every effort was made, by destroying bridges and blowing in tunnels, to render the railway junction useless to the invaders. By noon the Germans had developed a vigorous attack and, in the almost tropical heat, some of the French Territorials only put up a feeble resistance. Sufficient time was, however, gained by the defenders to complete the evacuation. The Germans, exhausted likewise by the weather, relaxed their efforts in the afternoon, so that it was not until the following morning that they actually occupied the city. It was now decided to send back the French 6th Army to cover the capital, and accordingly the 7th Corps fell back to the north-east of Paris and the 61st and 62nd Reserve Divisions were ordered to join the garrison of the capital. The 1st Cavalry Corps had already fallen back beyond the

Seine, and the whole of the 6th Army came under the orders of General Gallieni, the Military Governor of Paris.[1]

The British Retreat from Mons.—To turn now to the doings of the British Army which had been in such peril at Mons, Sir John French had recognized the possibility of being driven from the line Binche—Mons—Condé and had ordered a position in rear to be reconnoitred about a day's march to the south. This position had its right resting on the fortress of Maubeuge, and extended westward to the village of Jerlain, with a frontage of some fifteen miles. During the night of the 23rd-24th a certain amount of fighting continued along the Mons position, but not sufficient seriously to interfere with the arrangements for retreat. At daybreak on the 24th the Second Corps—which was on the left—was set in motion under cover of a demonstration against Binche made by the First Corps on the right. On the extreme left the Fifth Division was hard pressed by the Germans, but, thanks to the assistance of the cavalry and of the Nineteenth Brigade (which was moved up from Valenciennes), it managed to withdraw. The Second Corps now dug itself in on a line some four miles south of Mons to allow the First Corps to retire, which it did without much further loss, reaching the line Bavai—Maubeuge about 7 p.m. The line was eventually continued westward by the Second Corps, the Nineteenth Brigade took up a position, guarding the left, between Jerlain and Bry, and further westward still was the Cavalry Division. The retreat had been carried out under extremely trying conditions. The weather was scorching hot; the men—a great portion of

[1] The 1st Cavalry Corps consisted of the 1st, 3rd, and 5th Cavalry Divisions. It was dispatched into Belgium early in August but had been forced back across the frontier.

whom were reservists just recalled to the colours—were wearied after the forced marches to the frontier, and the severe fighting of the 23rd; and the roads were almost blocked at times with transport and streams of fugitives.

That night the British commander-in-chief was confronted with the problem as to what his next step should be. The situation, as it presented itself to him, was as follows. The Germans were making determined efforts to get round his left flank. On his right was the French 5th Army; but this was still retiring and that flank was, therefore, unprotected except for such support as was afforded by Maubeuge. It was clear that the intention of the Germans was to hem him in against that place and to surround him, and in these circumstances Sir John French realized that not a moment must be lost in retiring to another position. Orders were therefore issued for a further retirement to the line Cambrai—Le Cateau—Landrecies. Some assistance might perhaps be obtainable from General Sordet's 1st Cavalry Corps which, during the battle of Mons, had been posted a few miles in rear of the British right.[1] It was now in billets north of Avesnes, and during the night Sir John French visited General Sordet earnestly requesting his co-operation and support. The French general promised to obtain the sanction of his army commander to act on the British left, but added that his horses were too tired to move before the next day (the 25th August).

The retreat was recommenced at dawn on the 25th, covered by the British mounted troops, and all day long through the stifling heat the march continued. The British cavalry had some skirmishes with the German horse, but no serious attempt was made by the latter to break through the covering troops. By nine o'clock at night the army was upon its new line, some of which had been partially

[1] See p. 70 and footnote, p. 93.

entrenched by the earlier units to arrive ; and the left flank was strengthened by the newly arrived Fourth Division, the bulk of which had detrained at Le Cateau during the day. Sir John French, however, was in serious doubt as to the wisdom of standing to fight upon this line. His left flank was exposed, the French were still retiring on his right, and his troops were now in a really exhausted condition. In these circumstances he determined to call upon his troops to make a great effort to continue the retreat until some substantial obstacle like the Somme or Oise could be interposed between them and the enemy. Orders were, therefore, sent to the corps commanders to allow their men just sufficient rest to enable them to recover some of their strength, and to continue the retreat as soon as possible to the line Vermand—St. Quentin—Ribemont. The onslaught of the Germans, however, was to prevent this retirement being carried into immediate execution.

Night Attacks by the Germans.—The right of the line extended somewhat further east than Landrecies, for the centre of the First Division was actually at Maroilles. In the former village was the Fourth (Guards) Brigade of the Second Division. Hardly had the troops in these two places settled down to rest when the Germans were upon them. The attack against Maroilles was made by portions of the German IInd Army working up the right bank of the Sambre, and it resolved itself into an attack upon a bridge, the retention of which was of supreme importance for the British. The squadron left to guard it was quickly in difficulties and a battalion was dispatched at once to its assistance. The infantry collided with the Germans in the pitch blackness and a struggle ensued in which rifle butts and even fists were freely used, but gradually the Germans were forced back and the bridge regained. More serious was the attack upon Landrecies

made by advanced troops of the IXth Corps of the German Ist Army who had escaped detection as they threaded their way through the woods north of Landrecies. The night was dark and rainy and in favour of surprise, and, utilizing these advantages, the Germans, emerging from the forest, rushed the British picquets. Soon the Germans were pouring into the streets of the village, but the steadiness of the Guards restored the situation. Behaving most gallantly they drove back the attackers by hand-to-hand fighting, with a loss of at least one thousand killed and wounded.

Sir John French had been aroused when the firing first began and had ridden off to the threatened flank. The situation was critical and urgent calls for assistance were sent to the nearest French units on his right; these were two reserve divisions of the French 5th Army which were in bivouac some miles to the east.[1] In response to the earnest request of the British commander-in-chief the French troops moved out to the assistance of the British, and partly owing to this support but mainly to the skilful dispositions of the corps commander the First Corps was extricated and enabled to resume its march at dawn towards Wassigny and Guise.

The British overwhelmed at Le Cateau.—With the retirement of the First Corps after the fighting just described the situation of the British troops now remaining was as follows. The Second Corps (Third and Fifth Divisions) had its right upon Le Cateau and its left in the neighbourhood of Caudry, the line of defence being thence carried on by the Nineteenth Brigade and newly arrived Fourth Division to the south-east of Cambrai. As regards the cavalry it had necessarily become somewhat scattered dur-

[1] General Sordet's Cavalry Corps was by this time moving behind the British position en route to the left flank.

ing the fighting of the past two days, but General Allenby had succeeded in concentrating two brigades to the south of Cambrai, while two more were echelonned behind Le Cateau on the other flank. In accordance with the orders of Sir John French, all these troops were to have retired, like the First Corps, upon the 26th. But the Germans frustrated this idea, for their attacks on Landrecies and Maroilles were but an earnest of what was to come.

At daybreak it soon became apparent that the German Ist Army was about to launch a serious attack, and the commander of the Second Corps sent word to Sir John French to say that before he could retire he must beat the Germans back. To this message the commander-in-chief could only reply that the action should be broken off at the earliest possible moment and that no assistance from the First Corps could be hoped for. Meanwhile, the battle had developed all along the line, and soon the Germans had at least six hundred guns in action, to which the British could only oppose little more than one fourth of that number. Up to midday the battle was an artillery duel, in which the British batteries, though hopelessly outnumbered, played a splendid part ; but by the afternoon many of them had been silenced and the infantry attacks began. Before long it became clear that, if complete annihilation were to be avoided, a retirement must be attempted, and the order was given to begin it about 3.30 p.m. Some welcome relief was now afforded on the British left, for French troops under General d'Amade had begun to make their presence felt, and the French cavalry had joined hands with the British mounted troops.[1] Nevertheless the posi-

[1] The French cavalry was General Sordet's Cavalry Corps. Although Sir John French sent an urgent message to the French commander begging him to intervene upon the left, this was found to be impossible as the horses had been ridden to a standstill in the forty mile march behind the British front.

tion was well-nigh desperate, and only the self-sacrificing spirit of the British cavalry and artillery enabled the situation to be saved, the enemy's mounted troops being driven off by more than one charge. Fortunately for the defeated force the Germans had suffered too heavily to engage in an energetic pursuit. Far into the night of the 26th the retreat went on in pitch darkness and almost hopeless confusion, and was continued through the 27th and 28th towards Noyon, the enemy's pursuing cavalry being repulsed on the latter day with loss by the British horse. Some miles to the eastward the First Corps was likewise falling back, comparatively unhindered, so that on the evening of the 28th August the British Army, exhausted but unbeaten, lay down to rest upon the line Noyon—Chauny—La Fère, having thrown off the weight of the enemy's pursuit.

The situation was now somewhat improved. The two wings of the British Army had reunited. The French 6th Army was forming to the west, and its right was in touch with the British between Montdidier and Roye. On the other flank the French 5th Army was between La Fère and Guise. These circumstances enabled Sir John French to grant a rest to his exhausted troops upon the 29th and to give them an opportunity for the reorganization which they so sorely needed. The delay, however, necessary though it was, brought the pursuing Germans nearer; and by midday the British commander-in-chief again found the situation disquieting. According to the information at his disposal some five or six German corps were on the Somme, facing the French 5th Army on the Oise; at least two corps were advancing towards the British front and were crossing the Somme east and west of Ham, while a force estimated at three or four more German corps was opposing the French 6th Army on the

left. Such was the situation at 1 p.m. when he received a visit from General Joffre, and it induced him to represent strongly his position to the French commander-in-chief. The latter was most cordial and sympathetic, and was able to inform Sir John French that he had already directed the French 5th Army on the Oise to move forward and attack the Germans on the Somme with a view to checking pursuit. Under cover of this attack a further short retirement of the British was agreed upon, Sir John French promising to do his utmost to keep always within a day's march of the French. In pursuance of this arrangement the British retired late in the afternoon to a new position a few miles north of the line Soissons—Compiègne. On the morning of the 31st the march was once more resumed, and by evening the British Army was, generally speaking, on the line Crépy-en-Valois —Villers-Cotterêts, with its divisions to some extent recuperated and refreshed.

The French 5th Army.—It is now time to revert to the operations of the French 5th, 4th, and 3rd Armies, whose defeat along the Sambre and Meuse has been narrated in the previous chapter. Broadly speaking, it may be said that, while the French were enabled for a time to cling to Dun on the Meuse, their extreme left was forced back from Charleroi to La Fère. To take the 5th Army first, after its defeat at Charleroi it fell back in some disorder, pursued by the German IInd Army, and by the evening of the 24th was, generally speaking, on the line Maubeuge—Givet. No stand was, however, possible and the retreat went on. Maubeuge was thus left isolated for, as already described, the British commander-in-chief had determined not to be hemmed in against that place and was also in tetreat. The Germans dropped their VIIth Reserve Corps or invest the fortress.

The capture of the place was of considerable importance to the invaders, for its fall would set free a line of railway for their communications. By the evening of the 27th the line of the French 5th Army ran from Guise and south of Hirson to Rumigny, and on the following day, in order to render assistance to the British Army, it closed to its left and eventually took up a position behind the Oise facing west, with its new right between Guise and Virvins and its left, which touched the British, at La Fère. From here upon the 29th took place the offensive which was made in order to ease the pursuit on the retiring British. This offensive, called by the French the battle of Guise, was an extremely dexterous piece of tactics; and, though not completely successful, is well worthy of careful study.

The Battle of Guise.—It had been intended that the French 5th Army should deliver an attack upon St. Quentin on the 28th August. This, however, was found to be impossible, for on the evening of the 27th the 5th Army was on the general line, Guise—Hirson—Rumigny, with its greatest strength on the right. This latter factor, coupled with the fact that the army was deployed, facing north, ruled the proposed attack out of court—at least upon the 28th August; but as the necessity for seizing St. Quentin still seemed paramount, the commander of the French 5th Army had to have recourse to an extremely delicate manœuvre. His orders, issued during the 28th, were that his army should carry out a flank march behind the Oise by which the greatest weight should be transferred from the right flank to the left.[1] The British

[1] The flank march can be followed from the following date:—

On the evening of the 27th August the front of the 5th Army, from right to left, was generally Rumigny—Etréaupont—Guise—Origny-St. Benoite. The 1st, 10th, 3rd, and 18th Corps were on the eastern half of this line with a Reserve Division of General Bouttegourd on the right, and further still to the right was General Abonneau's Cavalry

Army was by this time on the line Noyon—La Fère ; and the French commander proposed with his reinforced left wing, and with the assistance of the British, to make the attack upon St. Quentin. To this end he included the following paragraph in his orders for the 29th August :—

"The British First Corps, debouching from the line of forts north of La Fère, will advance at 5 a.m. [on the 29th] towards the southern portion of St. Quentin, the right column following the La Fère—St. Quentin high road."

These orders were issued from Laon, the 5th Army Headquarters, and received the assent of General Joffre, who was at that town during the 28th August.

As has already been narrated, the situation of the British Army upon the 29th August was one of such extreme peril that a further retirement was absolutely essential for it ; and the project of any immediate co-operation between it and the French 5th Army had to be renounced. General Lanrezac had, therefore, to modify his plan to the extent that the two Reserve Divisions under General Valabrègue had to be put in as the left flank guard in the attack on St. Quentin. Early on the morning of the 29th August the 18th and 3rd Corps of the French 5th Army crossed the Oise between La Fère and Guise, heading for St. Quentin. But by 8 a.m. the situation on the right had become disquieting. There the 10th Corps was fronting

Division between Rumigny and Rozoy. The left was protected by two Reserve Divisions under General Valabrègue on the Oise north of Ribemont.

The flank march was to consist of the following movements :—

General Valabrègue was to fill in to his left and move south of Moy.

The 3rd and 18th Corps, each reinforced by an African Division, was to take post along the Oise between Origny—St. Benoite and Moy.

The 1st Corps was to move to Sains and form the army reserve.

The 10th Corps was to take post along the Oise east of Guise.

General Abonneau's Cavalry Division, to which was to be attached the Reserve Division of General Bouttegourd, was still to operate on the right.

north, to the east of Guise, and in the face of strong German attacks its right had to give ground. General Lanrezac had again to modify his plan and to issue new orders of which the tenor was as follows :—

The objective was still to be St. Quentin ; but first of all the enemy attacking the 10th Corps was to be thrown back over the Oise.

The Left Flank was still to be protected by the Reserve Divisions of General Valabrègue.

The 18th Corps was to continue its advance on St. Quentin, but was to avoid being seriously engaged with superior forces.

The 3rd Corps was to maintain its advanced troops west of the Oise, so as to facilitate the eventual crossing of the river and the connexion with the 18th Corps on its left. The main body of the Corps was, however, now to face north and to attack Guise.

The 10th Corps was to attack on the right of the 3rd Corps.

The 1st Corps, now in reserve about Sains, was to be ready to assist the 10th Corps.

The Right Flank was to be protected by General Abonneau's Cavalry Division.

It was, however, impossible to carry out this new plan, for by the time the orders had reached the various commanders the 10th Corps had been driven back too far to allow of an attack upon St. Quentin. General Lanrezac accordingly decided to renounce definitely all idea of attacking that place and to confine his efforts to driving back the Germans who were harassing the 10th Corps, and dealing with them so vigorously as to keep them quiet for some time. To this end he circulated the following order :—

" In view of the large number of Germans who have

appeared east of Guise the project of attacking St. Quentin is now renounced. It is now a question of defeating the enemy east of Guise, and of either destroying him or at any rate of driving him back across the Oise.

"The 18th Corps and the Reserve Divisions of General Valabrègue will mask St. Quentin, while the main body of the 5th Army (3rd, 10th, and 1st Corps) will make a determined attack towards the north. General Abonneau will leave a mixed detachment to maintain connexion with the 4th Army on the right, and will then move the main bodies of his own Cavalry Division and of General Bouttegourd's Reserve Division to Vervins ready to act against the enemy's left flank which has crossed the Oise west of the Vervins—Avesnes road."

The renouncement of the attack on St. Quentin was approved by General Joffre, who was present when the above instructions were drawn up. The main body of the 5th Army carried out its task with vigour, and along the Oise, east of Guise, the French roughly handled the German Guard, Guard Reserve, and Xth Corps. Upon their left, however, the French were less fortunate and were forced to give ground, the Germans then advancing upon the small fortress of La Fère, which soon fell. With the right bank of the Oise definitely lost, the 5th Army fell back on the 30th to a line running east from Soissons, and on the following day continued to move southwards in conformity with the British retreat. A new French Army, the 9th, which had assembled north of the Aisne, was now put in on the right of the 5th Army to link this up with the 4th Army to the east.

The French 4th and 3rd Armies.—Further to the right the 4th and 3rd Armies had to give ground continuously before the IIIrd, IVth, and Vth Armies of the Germans. For a moment the French held their own and their posses-

sion of the exits from the Ardennes enabled the 6th Corps of the French 3rd Army to drive back the enemy at Virton on the 25th. But the retirement of the 5th Army and the British compelled the 4th and 3rd Armies to follow suit. On the 26th the obsolete fortress of Longwy capitulated to the Germans after a protracted siege, its defence having been prolonged owing to the attackers' attempt to reduce it by field artillery alone. The order to retire reached the 4th Army when it was successfully holding back the enemy, and its commander, General Langle de Cary, telegraphed to General Joffre on the 27th asking permission to remain in his position. To this the French commander-in-chief replied that he had no objection to the 4th Army holding its ground for the 28th so as to show that the retreat was purely strategic, but that on the 29th the retirement must be continued.

The operations of the French in this sector of the front now became almost entirely defensive, and they were to some slight extent assisted by the arrival of some Belgian field troops from Namur and of the French regiment which had been sent to its succour. Along the line Mézières—Sedan —Longuyon the Germans strove to force the passage of the Meuse, but the French held on staunchly and the effort died away. A German standard remained in the victors' hands. On the 28th, however, the Germans retook the offensive, this time with success, breaking the French line at Donchery on the historic field of Sedan. The following day the French gave up the Meuse below Dun and were brought to battle once again on the line Signy—Novion Porcien. The great turning movement of the Germans in the west, however, compelled the French in this portion of the field to retire still further, and by the 31st August the 4th Army was about Rethel, while the 3rd Army was approaching the wooded plateau of the Argonne. These operations cost

the French the fortresses of Longwy, Montmédy, Mézières, Hirson, and Givet. The fall of Lille, Liége, and Namur has been told elsewhere. By the end of August, therefore, of all the northern strongholds Maubeuge alone was still untaken.

The Battle of the Grand Couronné de Nancy.—Passing by the fortress of Verdun, which, for the present, the Germans were content to observe, it will be remembered how the French 2nd Army penetrating into Lorraine, had been beaten at Morhange and driven back to the Grand Couronné de Nancy. There it had been rallied by General de Castelnau, who took up a position from St. Génévière past the heights of Mont St. Jean and Amance through Cerceuil to Dombasle, where the line took a deep concave curve through Saffais to Gerbéviller. From the left of the line to Dombasle was held by the 20th Corps under General Foch, while the re-entrant through Saffais and thence towards St. Die was occupied by the 15th and 16th Corps assisted by some troops from the French 1st Army. Whether the Germans merely desired to secure the road and railway junctions at Nancy, or whether their aim was to pierce the French fortress line at Toul, is not clear; but whatever was their objective their attacks were made with considerable vigour and the bulk of the VIth and VIIth Armies as well as mobile troops from Metz took part in the attempt. On the 24th a fierce onslaught was made against the right of the French position about Saffais, but the rush of the attack spent itself, and during the 25th and 26th the Germans were forced back step by step in spite of most determined efforts to hold their ground. At the same time an even fiercer attack was made upon General Castelnau's left and centre by the German VIth Army and troops from Metz. The latter had started to move up the valley of the Moselle on the

morning of the 22nd, having as their objective the village of St. Généviève, but, finding the position more formidable than had been anticipated, two days were devoted to an artillery bombardment. On the evening of the 24th the Germans advanced to the attack, but the French 75's did tremendous execution on the closely formed ranks. Four times was the attack repeated, until at nightfall the attempt was given up and the demoralized remnants fell back on Pont-à-Mousson, leaving nearly one-third of the 12,000 who had left Metz lying in front of the French trenches.

On the same day the German VIth Army under the Crown Prince of Bavaria attacked the centre of the French 2nd Army along the twenty-mile stretch from Mont St. Jean to Dombasle, severe fighting taking place along the ridge north of the Dombasle—Lunéville road. On the 25th the French retaliated with a counter-stroke a little further north. This attack failed, for what exact reason it is not easy to form an opinion. According to some accounts artillery support was lacking, with the result that the infantry suffered very heavily, while other versions lay stress on the intensity of the French artillery fire and on the losses inflicted by it on the German battalions. Be this as it may, in spite of the failure of this counter-stroke the general run of the battle to the end of August—and beyond it—was in favour of the French. By the 31st August the Germans had brought up heavy guns opposite Amance, foreshadowing another attempt to capture Nancy at all costs. But to the south operations developed into something approaching siege warfare, the Germans falling back from one entrenched line to another, while the French were in turn compelled to consolidate the ground won in each advance. On the 28th the fort of Manonviller some miles east of Lunéville fell, in circumstances to which some

mystery is attached, after but two days' bombardment and apparently with scarcely any loss to the garrison. Further to the south, in Alsace, the fierceness of the first fighting had died away. With their efforts now focused elsewhere the Germans had only comparatively small forces in this region, and the French had been constrained to draw upon their right wing to cope with the great turning movement in the north-west, the greater part of the army which had invaded Alsace having been withdrawn upon the 26th for entrainment to the extreme left of the line of battle.

Operations in Belgium.—So soon as the Germans had stifled the Belgian sortie from Antwerp, at the time when the battle of Mons was being fought, they regained possession of Alost, Termonde, and Malines. Then occurred one of those acts of savagery which have stained the German arms. At the end of the fighting which had taken place at Louvain there was an outburst of fire from some houses in the town and several Germans were hit. An accusation was made that the shots were fired by civilians, although evidence was brought to show that all the inhabitants, including the police, had been disarmed by the Belgian authorities. The Germans remained deaf to explanations and proceeded to retaliate with ruthless barbarity. Hundreds of the inhabitants were shot in cold blood, and the city of Louvain—the Oxford of Belgium—was systematically fired. The university with its priceless library was completely destroyed, and a great portion of the town reduced to ashes. Unfortunately Louvain was not the sole evidence of the German system of waging war, for Aerschot, Tirlemont, and Termonde suffered an almost similar fate. All over the greater portion of Belgium, now in German hands, were enacted terrible scenes of rapine, pillage, and almost inconceivable cruelty.

Of military operations, in the more chivalrous interpretation of the term, there were practically none. The Belgian Army was once more behind the outworks of Antwerp, over which hovered a Zeppelin airship on the 25th dropping bombs on the chief buildings of the city. On the same day the last fort of Namur surrendered. The 28th August was marked by a formal declaration of war by Austria on Belgium. The aim of the Germans was now to restore the damaged railway system in Belgium so as to make the fullest use of the communications rendered available by the fall of Liége and Namur, and the demolition of the railways, which had been effectively carried out by the Belgian troops as they fell back to Antwerp, was quickly counteracted by the skill and activity of German pioneer battalions. Only the complete intimidation of the inhabitants was required to ensure the safe transport of supplies to the German front; and of the policy of intimidation the Germans were to show themselves past masters.

Disaster to the Russians in East Prussia.—In the previous chapter it has been related how two Russian columns had penetrated into East Prussia, had defeated the German armies which opposed them, and had thrown the defenders in confusion back into Königsberg. The reconquest of East Prussia was, however, soon accomplished and was due largely to the expert local knowledge of General von Hindenburg. That officer had spent much of his life in East Prussia and had made the defence of the province his especial hobby. A veteran of the campaigns of 1866 and 1870, he had been for some years in retirement when war broke out in 1914, but so soon as the situation on the eastern frontier had become critical he was recalled to service so that his exact knowledge of the intricate topography of the Russian border might be utilized. On review-

ing the situation General von Hindenburg could not but see that the Russian position was of great strategic peril. The invading columns were separated by about a hundred miles, and had the extremely difficult Masurian Lake country between them. He decided, therefore, to throw a striking force with the utmost rapidity against General Samsonov's southern column, while containing the Russian northern column with the garrison of Königsberg. His first step was to concentrate his striking force east of the Vistula between the fortresses of Graudenz and Thorn. For this there were available the troops which had retired south-westwards before the Russians, the Ist Corps brought by sea from Königsberg to Dantzig, and various reserve divisions from the Posen frontier—in all some three to four army corps. Advancing rapidly into East Prussia, where he was well served by an admirable network of strategic railways, he had taken up a position with his left between Osterode and Allenstein and his right about Soldau on the 26th August. Right opposite the centre of his line, which was slightly concave, was the hamlet of Tannenberg, from which the battle takes its name. The XXth Corps had been left in Königsberg to contain the Russians in the north.

Fate now played into the hands of the German commander, for General Samsonov, elated by his easy triumph at Frankenau, had conceived the daring resolution of pushing westward to make himself master of the crossings of the Vistula, his chief objective apparently being the second-class fortress of Graudenz. The nature of the country added greatly to the risk, for the innumerable lakes compelled him to advance upon a broad front with but little communication between the many columns into which his force was necessarily subdivided; and further, the thick woods with which the land was covered rendered

all reconnaissance, whether by cavalry or by air-craft, a matter of considerable difficulty. On the 26th the Russian advanced guards came in contact with the German troops, but for a time General Samsonov seems to have been under the delusion that he had to do merely with unenterprising rear-guards. He was soon, however, to be undeceived, for the following day General von Hindenburg retorted with a vigorous counter-attack. This was at first directed against the Russian left in the neighbourhood of Soldau, and though it was in reality but a feint, it succeeded in cutting off the Russians from the main road and railway leading to Mlawa. The main attack was against the Russian right, and to that quarter of the field the German commander hurried thousands of troops in taxi-cabs, motor-omnibuses, and lorries, swinging forward his left as these reinforcements arrived. General Samsonov now found that his five corps were in serious danger of being hemmed in within a region where the avenues for escape were but few. One exit alone remained open, a defile of solid ground between the marshes near Ortelsburg. For two days the Russians made heroic efforts to gain time for the withdrawal of their trains, but General von Hindenburg's left flank was too strong and too well handled. The Russian defence broke and before long the retirement degenerated into a rout. Hundreds of guns were abandoned in the mud which reached to the axle trees, and on the 31st August General Samsonov was killed by a shell. Little more than one corps reached Ortelsburg, in full flight towards the frontier. In killed and wounded the Russians had suffered over 20,000 casualties, while between 80,000 and 90,000 prisoners are said to have fallen into German hands.

The Russians and Austrians.—Along the frontier between Poland and Galicia the Austrian and Russian Armies were

still engaged in the give and take operations which had now lasted for more than a fortnight. On the Austrian left the Ist Army was decidedly stronger than the Russian 1st Army by which it was opposed, for the latter had to make large detachments to watch the German concentration along the Posen frontier. The Austrian commander had been prompt to utilize this superiority, and on the 25th won the battle of Krasnik, taking 3000 prisoners and twenty guns. Flushed with this success he pushed forward rapidly to Lublin, destroying the railway connecting Kieff and Warsaw. Almost a hundred miles, however, now separated the Austrian Ist and IInd Armies, and all intelligence received pointed to the fact that the Russian 2nd and 3rd Armies were converging towards the Austrian fortress of Lemberg. Such news was soon verified. The Russian 2nd—or centre—Army was fighting its way stolidly across the Upper Bug, while on its left the 3rd Army had been meeting with marked success. A three days' battle took place outside Tarnapol, which was taken in spite of a stubborn resistance on the part of the Austrian IInd Army. The loss of Tarnapol compelled that army to fall back, and on the 27th August the Russians had gained possession of Halicz. The Russian 3rd Army now wheeled northwards, and in conjunction with the 2nd Army to the north of it began the enveloping movement which was to seal the fate of Lemberg.

The Servian Campaign.—Having burnt her fingers in Servia, Austria soon realized that the fate of that country could be more profitably decided elsewhere in the theatre of war. The activity of the Russians and the unexpected rapidity of their mobilization called for the maximum of troops to repel invasion, and in these circumstances to leave several regular corps on the Servian and Italian frontier seemed inadvisable. Portions of these corps were,

therefore, relieved by second line troops and transferred by rail to Galicia.[1] Austria contented herself with keeping up the bombardment of Belgrade, but otherwise remained on the defensive, while Servia for her part was glad to rest upon her oars after her recent victory.

Naval Operations.—The eight-day period of which this chapter treats was marked by a decided liveliness at sea, including a brisk naval action. The German High Seas Fleet having retired behind the defences of Wilhelmshaven and Kiel, a plot was laid to entice it from its shelter. The British plan was to send some submarines to demonstrate in the neighbourhood of Heligoland and in the event of German vessels emerging from their sanctuary they were to be dealt with at leisure in the open sea by a force lying behind the decoy. The concerted operation has been described as a "scooping movement," and the term aptly describes the tactics which were to be employed. The British force engaged consisted of the submarines, First and Third Destroyer Flotillas, the First Light Cruiser Squadron, First Battle Cruiser Squadron, and Seventh Cruiser Squadron, the total number of vessels employed being 8 submarines, 39 destroyers, 8 light cruisers, 6 armoured cruisers, and 5 battle cruisers, each of which latter carried eight 13·5-inch guns. About 8 a.m. on the 28th August the submarines revealed themselves and the Germans quickly rose at the bait. From behind the shelter of Heligoland there emerged a number of destroyers and two cruisers, which were soon engaged with the British destroyer flotillas and their two attendant cruisers which swooped down upon the scene, the action generally being in favour of the British vessels. The Germans now sent three more cruisers, and the British retaliated by calling

[1] Apparently three divisions were relieved or withdrawn, leaving five corps in this portion of the theatre of war.

up the Light Cruiser Squadron, which arrived some time about noon, and later by putting in the powerful battle cruiser squadron. The result of the engagement was officially described as being "fortunate and fruitful." The Germans lost two new cruisers, the *Maintz* and *Koln*, as well as the older cruiser *Ariadne*, and one or two destroyers were sent to the bottom. No British vessels were lost, and only the light cruiser *Arethusa* and two destroyers were damaged, the loss of life being comparatively small.

In other waters Germany had to acknowledge further naval loss. On the 27th the cruiser *Magdeburg* ran ashore on an island in the Gulf of Finland, and a Russian naval force appearing, her captain blew up his vessel after a brief resistance. On the previous day the British cruiser *Highflyer* had fought and sunk the German auxiliary cruiser *Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse* off the West African coast. That vessel had made her way into the Atlantic by Iceland and had sunk two British liners before she met her end. On the evening of the 29th the Colonial Office announced the occupation of German Samoa by a military force from New Zealand in conjunction with a naval covering force consisting of six vessels, British, Australian and French.[1] In the Far East the time limit granted by Japan in her ultimatum expired on August 23rd. No reply was vouchsafed by Germany, and a state of war thus came about. Austria declared war on Japan three days later, and on the 27th August at 9 a.m. a blockade of the coast of the German leased territory at Kiao-chau was announced by the Japanese Admiralty.

Summary to 31st August.—On land the week just past had been one of misfortune for the Allies. The Russian offensive in East Prussia, which had roused great hopes that the pressure on the Western Front might be

[1] See footnote, p. 66.

relieved, had gone down in sudden and crushing disaster. On the Western Front itself Belgium was practically overrun, though curiously enough the Germans had not seized the ports on the Belgian seaboard, and the Belgian Army was cooped up within the fortress of Antwerp. In France a rich and important territory was in the invaders' hands ; the fall of fortress after fortress had freed their communications ; and the capital was in immediate danger. Strenuous efforts were indeed being made to strengthen the fortifications of Paris, but the new German siege artillery had shown its mastery at Liége and Namur, and the French Government was preparing to quit the city for Bordeaux. Nevertheless some gleams relieved the prevailing gloom. In front of Nancy French troops were revealing a tenacity of purpose and a power of recuperation which could not but be extremely disconcerting to the German General Staff, and north of Nancy the French 3rd, 4th, and 5th armies as they retreated had destroyed the railways in a most effective manner, and the ever-increasing communications of the Germans were feeling the strain. These French armies, too, though defeated were by no means broken ; and the battles they had fought had been a fine schooling for the more skilled commanders, while affording an excuse for the removal of those whose efficiency had been less conspicuous. Further, the British Army, which for four days had been in hourly danger of annihilation, was now in comparative safety. And finally, not only had the transfer of French troops from the right flank to the left been successfully accomplished, but the centre had been stiffened by the insertion of a new army. It was a dark hour for the Allied cause, but there were yet signs of the splendid dawn that was soon to break.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MAJOR OPERATIONS ON THE EASTERN AND WESTERN FRONTS FROM THE EVENING OF 31ST AUGUST TO THE EVENING OF 4TH SEPTEMBER

Maps 6, 1, 2, 7.

The Russians victorious at Lemberg.—It was in Galicia, where the Russian 2nd and 3rd Armies were left in the previous chapter converging on Lemberg, that the dawn first broke. That city was of considerable importance to the Austrians, for besides being the administrative capital of Galicia it was also a valuable strategic point, owing to its being situated at the junction of the railways leading to Cracow, Vienna, and Transylvania.[1] Further, it was the advanced base of the Austrian IInd Army, and immense quantities of ammunition and supplies had in consequence accumulated in the place. Strictly speaking, Lemberg was not a fortress, but it was surrounded by semi-permanent works, though these were quite inadequate against modern artillery. On the 31st August the Russian 2nd and 3rd Armies on their fifty-mile front made a further step forward. The Austrian right wing was turned and almost destroyed, several thousand prisoners being made. On the other flank the right of the Russian 2nd Army swept round north of the city and threatened the communication of the Austrian IInd Army, in spite of an advance by forced

[1] Transylvania is not shown on Map 1. It is the salient which projects from Austria-Hungary into Rumania.

marches on the part of German troops operating in Western Poland. On the following day the Russians gained possession of the advanced works which lay some twelve miles from the city, the defenders flying in complete disorder, and a further success was secured by a force acting beyond their extreme left wing, Czernovitz, the chief town of the Bukovina, falling into Russian hands. The 3rd of September witnessed the retirement of the Austrians towards Przemysl, during which operation the Cossacks did such execution that the retirement degenerated into a rout, and the same day saw the entrance of the Russian troops into Lemberg. An immense quantity of supplies and ammunition fell into the victors' hands, and the total number of prisoners taken during the attacks of the town and in the retreat of the defenders has been estimated at 100,000. The Austrian Government now began feverishly to strengthen the defences at Vienna, and plans were made to transfer the administration to Prague or Innsbruck. The success of the Russians, coming as it did immediately after their disaster in East Prussia, exercised a profound moral significance, but unfortunately the magnitude of the victory gave rise to exaggerated estimates as to its result upon the Austrians, and it was forgotten that where nations count their armed forces in millions, the loss of even a hundred thousand men can be survived.

Further retirement of the Franco-British left.—It would have formed a somewhat dramatic anniversary of the week of Sedan if a successful Allied offensive in the west could have synchronized with the great victory which Russia had achieved at Lemberg. But it was no part of General Joffre's plan immediately to pursue the advantage his 5th Army had secured near St. Quentin. A further general retirement to the line of the Marne had been ordered, to which the French forces on the more eastern sectors of the

line were directed to conform. While closely adhering to his strategic conception of drawing the enemy on at all points until a favourable situation was created from which to assume the offensive, General Joffre found it necessary from day to day to modify the method by which he sought to obtain his object owing to the development of the enemy's plans and to various changes in the general situation.

In conformity with the movements of the French forces the retirement of the British continued from day to day. Although they were not severely pressed by the enemy rearguard actions took place continually, and indeed, on September 1st some stiff fighting took place at Villers-Cotterêts and Nery. Near the former place the First Corps, in its retirement, got into some very difficult forest country and a somewhat severe rearguard action took place in which the brunt of the fighting was borne by the Fourth (Guards) Brigade. The German attack was beaten off, but in the close wood fighting the Guards suffered considerably. At Nery, early in the morning in a thick fog, the First Cavalry Brigade was suddenly attacked by a German force consisting of six cavalry regiments and twelve guns. The British cavalry were momentarily in danger of losing their horse artillery battery, which was heavily engaged by the German guns; but with the help of some troops operating on their left they not only recovered their own battery, but actually succeeded in capturing the twelve guns from the Germans.

On the same day the vanguard of the British Army arrived at Meaux, a market town of 14,000 inhabitants, twenty-eight miles east of Paris. For twenty or thirty miles north of the town, as far back as Compiègne and Villers-Cotterêts, every road was crowded with khaki-clad horse, foot, and artillery. The troops were preceded and

accompanied by an unceasing stream of fugitive French civilians, for the villagers on learning of the approach of the Germans had collected such of their scanty possessions as were easily portable and were fleeing south. "It was a sad sight. There were huge waggons of grain; there were herds of cattle, flocks of sheep; there were waggons full of household effects, with often as many as twenty people sitting aloft; there were carriages; there were automobiles with the occupants crowded in among bundles done up in sheets; there were women pushing overloaded handcarts; there were women pushing baby carriages; there were dogs and cats and goats; there was every sort of vehicle you ever saw, drawn by every sort of beast that can draw, from dogs to oxen, from boys to donkeys. Here and there was a man on horseback, riding along the line trying to keep it moving in order and to encourage the weary."[1]

Although the worst of the retreat was now over and the British troops had profited by the one day's respite on the 29th, the long marches and the constant fighting had told severely on all ranks. Yet the *moral* of the troops was quite unshaken. An eye-witness who shared their hardships to the full tells how on the lips of all was the question when would they be sent forward once more to the attack. In vivid words he paints the British soldier of those days—"ragged, footsore, bearded, dirty and unkempt, gaunt-eyed from lack of sleep, but upheld by that invincible spirit which is the glory of the British race."[2]

During the afternoon of the 2nd the President of the French Republic and the members of the Government left Paris for Bordeaux, after having issued a manifesto to the nation and delegated their powers to the Military Governor

[1] Mildred Aldrich, *A Hilltop on the Marne.*

[2] Rev. O. Watkins, C.F., *With French in France and Flanders.*

of Paris. On the following day the British main body reached the Marne and crossed it by the bridges east and west of Meaux. In accordance with directions received from General Joffre these bridges were then blown up and a further retirement to a position behind the Seine was arranged for.[1] In conformity with this extension of the scheme of retirement Sir John French was asked by the generalissimo to continue his march twelve miles further to the south, which brought the British into position behind the line of the Grand Morin.[2] In the meantime the Germans had thrown bridges across the Marne and crossed that river in force, threatening the Allies along the front of the British Army and of the French 5th and 9th Armies on its right, in consequence of which several small outpost actions took place. Of these latter armies the former was on the line Rozoy—Esternay, while the 9th held a position from the south of Sézanne to Camp de Mailly and Sompuis. Further to the east the 4th Army, by the evening of the 4th September, carried on the line by Humbauville and south of Vitry-le-François to Sermazie, and the 3rd Army, in which was now included the moblie garrison of Verdun, was disposed round that fortress. This army had repelled an attack by the Vth and VIth Reserve Corps of the German Vth Army about Montfaucon on the 1st and 2nd September and had then fallen back by Varennes and Clermont. During this march the 4th Corps was detached and sent westward to join the 6th Army[3] and the 42nd Division of the 6th Corps was handed over

[1] The position referred to had been decided upon by General Joffre on the 1st September. It ran as follows, Bray-sur-Seine—Nogent-sur-Seine—Arcis-sur-Aube—Vitry-le-François—country north of Bar-le-duc.

[2] On the 4th September.

[3] The 4th Corps, however, did not actually join the 6th Army till the 8th.

to the new 9th Army of General Foch. A change in the higher command was also effected, General Ruffey giving place to General Sarrail. On the other flank the French 6th Army, which had fallen back from Amiens on to Paris, was about St. Denis and the western suburbs of Paris on the evening of September 2nd. The following day it was moved out to the north-east.[1]

The pursuing German armies.—The position of the five German armies concerned in the pursuit of the Franco-British left and centre was, on the evening of the 4th, generally speaking, a line in close touch with the Allied front as given above. The Vth Army, under the Crown Prince, after its successful engagement at Longwy, had thrown its right wing across the Meuse below Verdun and had moved against that fortress, which was then partially invested. In touch with this army and to the west of it was the IVth Army, under the Duke of Würtemberg, which, after its victory near Sedan, was pushed on past Châlons, where it was sharply attacked by the retiring French 4th Army. Working still westward was the German IIIrd Army, consisting of Saxon troops, which crossed the Marne east and west of Epernay, and on its right was the IInd Army at the moment apparently on a line east and west of Ville-en-Tardenois.[2] Then came a gap to where lay the Ist Army of General von Kluck, which had been chiefly charged with the

[1] Its position was then as follows: Round Dammartin the 55th and 56th Reserve Divisions and a Moorish Brigade under General Lamaze; near Louvres the 14th Division and the 63rd Reserve Division of the 7th Corps under General Vauthier; north-east of Claye a brigade of cavalry under General Gillet. The garrison of Paris—exclusive of units sent to reinforce the 6th Army during the battle—consisted of the 83rd, 85th, 89th, and 92nd Territorial Divisions and a brigade of *Fusiliers Marins*.

[2] According to the German official Bulletin of 4th September the IInd Army had up to August 31st taken 6 regimental colours, 233 heavy guns, 116 field guns, 79 machine guns, 166 waggons, and 12,934 prisoners.

shepherding of the British force and of sweeping the country wide to the west. The right columns of this army had stretched to Amiens and Beauvais, while cavalry detachments had penetrated almost as far as Rouen. On the 3rd September its main body was on the line Creil—Senlis—Nanteuil. And it had begun to close in on its left, for by that date Lille, Arras, Douai, Béthune, and Lens were reported to be clear of Germans.

General Joffre's opportunity.—On that day there occurred an event which was to change the whole aspect of the war. The direction of the march of the German Ist Army was altered. Hitherto an advance on Paris had been regarded as almost certain, but just before midnight on the night of the 3rd–4th September a despatch was published in Paris to the effect that contact with the Germans on the line Creil —Nanteuil had been lost. Some unexpected movement was clearly foreshadowed, and early on the morning of the 4th aeroplanes rose from the city to solve the mystery. During the forenoon they were able to report to General Gallieni, the Military Governor of Paris, that cavalry scouts followed by large bodies of infantry were moving in a south-easterly direction, across the British front, and further air reconnaissances, in which British aviators did splendid service, placed it beyond all doubt that, all day long on the 4th, the German Ist Army was moving generally east of a line drawn from Nanteuil to Lizy on the River Ourcq. A consideration as to the probable reasons which induced General von Kluck to accept the hazard of attempting a flank march across the face of an enemy in position and in the immediate vicinity of a large fortress may with advantage be reserved for another chapter.[1] All that need now be said is that the plan was apparently conceived with the object of making a vigorous effort

[1] See p. 256.

to break the Allies' line at some point of supposed weakness. But whatever may have been its cause or its ultimate object, the French commanders were quick to realize that such changes do not often occur in war, and to grasp the fact that this flank march offered them an exceptionally favourable opportunity for attack. The project of a further retirement behind the Seine was at once abandoned. It was General Gallieni who took the first step, for on the morning of the 4th September he conceived the idea of launching the 6th Army against the German forces moving south-east. At 9 a.m. he thus wrote to General Maunoury: "I shall give you your marching orders so soon as I know the direction of the march of the British Army. Meanwhile be ready to march this afternoon so as to make an attack to-morrow, the 5th September, east of Paris." He then telephoned his action to the generalissimo, who approved of the course taken;[1] and General Joffre in the evening issued the necessary orders to his troops.

General Joffre's Orders for Attack :—

(1) Advantage must be taken of the risky situation of the German Ist Army to concentrate against it the efforts of the Allied Armies on our extreme left. All preparations must be made during the 5th for an attack on the 6th September.

(2) The following general arrangements are to be carried out by the evening of the 5th September :—

(*a*) All the available forces of the 6th Army[2] north-east of Meaux are to be ready to cross the Ourcq between

[1] When the 6th Army fell back on Paris it came under the orders of General Gallieni, the Military Governor of the capital.

[2] The 6th Army originally consisted of portion of the 7th Corps and four reserve divisions (see p. 89). But on the 1st September the Military Governor of Paris was advised by the War Department that the 45th Division, from Algeria, and the 4th Corps (see p. 127) would be added to

Lizy and May-en-Multien, in the general direction of Château Thierry. The available portions of the 1st Cavalry Corps which are close at hand are to be handed over to General Maunoury for this operation.

(*b*) The British Army is to establish itself on the line Changis—Coulommiers, facing east, ready to attack in the general direction of Montmirail.

(*c*) The 5th Army will close slightly on its left and take up the general line Courtaçon—Esternay—Sézanne, ready to attack generally speaking from south to north. The 2nd Cavalry Corps will ensure connexion between the British Army and the 5th Army.

(*d*) The 9th Army will cover the right of the 5th Army by holding the southern outlets of the St. Gond marshes and by placing part of its forces on the tableland north of Sézanne.

(3) These different armies are to attack on the morning of the 6th September.

it. The arrival of the 4th Corps, however, from the neighbourhood of Verdun was delayed; and it was not ready to take its post in the 6th Army when General Joffre penned the above orders. The 61st and 62nd Reserve Divisions, also, which had arrived at Pontoise on the 4th September, were too exhausted to take their place in line. Hence the expression "All the available forces." Later, the Military Governor of Paris hurried portion of the 4th Corps to the firing line by commandeering thousands of motor-cars, taxicabs, and motor omnibuses (see footnote 3, p. 183).

CHAPTER IX

THE BATTLE OF THE MARNE. EVENTS OF THE 5TH SEPTEMBER

Maps 2, 7, 5.

The die was now cast, and it only remained for the Franco-British Armies to carry out to the full the tasks assigned them by the French generalissimo. It was on the morning of the 5th that the sensational order to advance reached the rank and file, to be everywhere greeted with undisguised enthusiasm. The moment was eminently favourable, for not only had one of the German armies taken a great strategic liberty, but on the other flank at Nancy the enemy, though not yet finally done with, had been brought to a standstill. During the day Sir John French met General Joffre at the request of the latter, and the details of the new offensive, particularly so far as they affected the British Army, were carefully discussed. General Joffre announced his intention of wheeling up the left flank of the 6th Army, pivoting it on the Marne and directing it to move on the Ourcq, which river it was to cross as a preliminary to the attack upon the German Ist Army. Sir John French was to effect a change of front to his right so as to fill up the gap between the 5th and 6th French Armies, and was then to advance against the enemy in front and join in the general offensive movement.

Disposition of the Franco-British Armies.—Working from west to east the disposition of the armies of France

and England between Paris and Verdun as they stood during the 5th September was as follows:—

French 6th Army: General Maunoury.
7th Corps.
45th Division.
55th and 56th Reserve Divisions.
A Moorish Brigade.
1st Cavalry Corps: General Sordet.

This army had endeavoured to effect its concentration at Amiens,[1] the 7th Corps having been brought by rail from Alsace, but had been forced to fall back on Paris. It now stood on the line Dammartin—Claye and to the south of the latter town. The 45th Division did not actually come up until the evening of the 5th and was kept in reserve. The 1st Cavalry Corps had fallen back south of the Seine, very exhausted. This army received several important reinforcements during the battle.[2]

British Army: Field-Marshal Sir John French.
First Corps: General Sir Douglas Haig.
Second Corps: General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien.
Third Corps:[3] General Pulteney.
Cavalry Division: General Allenby.

This army lay behind the Grand Morin on the general line Bailly—La Houssaye—Courpalay. From left to right the corps lay in the following order: Third, Second, First, and were covered by the cavalry.

[1] See p. 89.

[2] See text, *passim*.

[3] The Third Corps—in the absence of the Sixth Division still in England—consisted of the Fourth Division and Nineteenth Infantry Brigade.

French 5th Army : General Franchet d'Esperey.[1]
1st Corps.
3rd Corps.
10th Corps.
18th Corps.
51st, 53rd, and 69th Reserve Divisions.
2nd Cavalry Corps : General Conneau.

The front of this army extended from about Courtaçon on the left to between Esternay and Sézanne on the right. The 2nd Cavalry Corps was on the left flank in touch with the British Army.

French 9th Army :[2] General Foch.
9th Corps.
11th Corps.
42nd Division.
Moorish Division.
52nd and 60th Reserve Divisions.
9th Cavalry Division.

This army occupied the front Sézanne—Camp de Mailly, near Sompuis. The 9th Cavalry Division was on the right flank.

French 4th Army : General Langle de Cary.
2nd Corps.
12th Corps.
17th Corps.
22nd (Colonial) Corps.

The 4th Army occupied a position from Sompuis, through Humbauville, thence south of Vitry-le-François,

[1] Vice General Lanrezac.

[2] This army is sometimes known as the 7th Army, but the official designation is as given in text.

as far as Sermaize. It was reinforced on the 9th September by the 21st Corps from the 1st Army.

French 3rd Army : General Sarrail.[1]
(4th Corps.[2])
5th Corps.
6th Corps (less 42nd Division).
One brigade of the 54th Division.
65th, 67th, and 75th Reserve Divisions.
7th Cavalry Division.

This army was posted on the line Revigny—Souilly, and on its right it joined up with the mobile garrison of the fortress of Verdun. It was reinforced on the 7th September by the 15th Corps from the 2nd Army.

Disposition of the German Armies.

Ist Army : General von Kluck.
IInd Corps.
IIIrd Corps.
IVth Corps.
IXth Corps.
IVth Reserve Corps.
(IXth Reserve Corps.)
IInd and IVth Cavalry Divisions.

Of this army the IXth Reserve Corps had been left in Belgium to invest Antwerp, which was still holding out. The IVth Reserve Corps was posted on a line south of Nanteuil and west of the Ourcq to form a flank guard for the new march of the German Ist Army. The main

[1] Vice General Ruffey.

[2] The 4th Corps had by this left the 3rd Army and had been sent towards Paris, where it was directly under General Joffre until the 8th September. See p. 119.

body of that army had its right about Crécy, and the line ran thence generally eastwards through St. Augustin and Sancy to Esternay. It seems that General von Kluck had rather lost the French 6th Army while his flank march was in progress; his aviators had not been able to render an accurate estimate of the troops forming it owing to the difficulties imposed on reconnaissance by the numerous houses which composed the environs of Paris.

IInd Army : General von Bülow.
Guard Corps.
VIIth Corps.
(VIIth Reserve Corps.)
Xth Corps.[1]
Xth Reserve Corps.
Two cavalry divisions.

The headquarters of the IInd Army was at Montmirail and its line stretched thence, keeping north of the marshes of St. Gond, through Congy to Ecury-le-Repos.[2] The VIIth Corps was echelonned behind the right rear, north-west of Montmirail. The VIIth Reserve Corps had been dropped at Maubeuge to invest that place.

IIIrd Army : General von Hausen.
XIIth Corps.
XIIth Reserve Corps.
XIXth Corps.
(XIXth Reserve Corps.)[3]

[1] Part of this corps was still detained at Liége, or was on its way south from that place.

[2] It would appear that the main body of the IInd Army crossed the Marne between Dormans and Epernay some time during the afternoon of the 5th September and gained contact with the French 5th and 9th Armies shortly before midnight.

[3] The best authorities consulted are in disagreement as to the inclusion of this corps in the IIIrd Army.

This army consisted of Saxon troops and was in position with its right in touch with advanced troops of the IInd Army about Ecury-le-Repos. Its centre was opposite Sommesous and its left extended towards Vitry-le-François. Of the XIIth Reserve Corps one division—the XXIVth—had been left investing Givet and did not rejoin until September 7th.

IVth Army : Duke of Würtemberg.

VIIIth Corps.
XVIIIth Corps.
VIIIth Reserve Corps.
XVIIIth Reserve Corps.
One (or two) cavalry divisions.

The line of this army ran from near Vitry-le-François to Ponthion and thence by Possesse to Somme-Yèvre.

Vth Army : German Crown Prince.

VIth Corps.
XIIIth Corps.
XVIth Corps.
Vth Reserve Corps.
VIth Reserve Corps.
One cavalry division.

The Crown Prince's army lay in two portions. One part of it, consisting of the three regular corps, faced the French 3rd Army on the line Charmontois—Triaucourt—Froidos. The two reserve corps were to the north of Verdun, the VIth being on the left bank near Montfaucon, and the Vth on the opposite bank about Consenvoye.

The French, British, and German armies thus enumerated above were those immediately concerned in the operations which are now known as the Battle of the Marne. Further

to the south-east the opposing lines carried on from Verdun to the Swiss frontier, and in that sector the German VIth and VIIth Armies, and detachments in Alsace, were in contact with the 1st and 2nd Armies of the French.[1]

Description of the Battlefield.—The area on which the battle was about to be contested may be delineated as follows: A line drawn east and west through Compiègne

[1] The French 2nd Army lay between Pont-à-Mousson and St. Die, and the 1st Army carried on the line to Belfort.

As regards the actual numbers disposed of by either side at the battle of the Marne the most authoritative French and German sources abstain from any attempt at exact calculation. Apart from the usual difficulties of separating combatant from non-combatant formations, all calculations are rendered nugatory by the impossibility of ascertaining what casualties either side had suffered since the opening of the war, and how far such casualties had been replaced; and by the general secrecy maintained by the rival armies. On the German side, too, the exact composition of the Reserve Corps, and whether Reserve formations were or were not included in the Regular Corps, is not yet fully known. All that can here be said is that on the morning of the 5th September, 1914, on the line Paris—Verdun, but exclusive of the garrisons of those fortresses, the numbers at the disposal of General Joffre can hardly have been less than 7 0,000. It is generally believed, except by the German public, that the Germans were superior in numbers along the battle front. A comparison with some of the greater battles of the century which preceded the Marne will be of interest.

Battle.	*Date.*	*Nationality.*	*Number Engaged*
Waterloo	1815	French	60,000
		Allies	70,000
Königgrätz	1866	Austrians	215,000
		Prussians	220,000
Wörth	1870	French	45,000
		Germans	88,000
Gravelotte	1870	French	113,000
		Germans	185,000
Liao-yang	1904	Russians	130,000
		Japanese	110,000
Sha Ho	1904	Russians	200,000
		Japanese	170,000
Mukden	1905	Russians	270,000
		Japanese	280,000

forms the northern boundary and a similar line through Sézanne and Vitry-le-François will mark the southern edge, the sides of the battlefield being marked by north and south lines drawn through Verdun and slightly to the west of Compiègne respectively. A rectangle is thus formed inside of which took place all the fighting of the battle of the Marne, and it includes the entrenched position on the right bank of the Aisne, back to which the Germans retired after their defeat. The length of the rectangle from east to west is roughly 120 miles, and the distance from the southern to the northern edge is 50 miles, so that the battlefield may be said to cover an area of some 6000 square miles. An equal area in England would be marked at the four corners by Bristol and Leominster on the west and by Cambridge and Woolwich on the east, and would include the whole of the counties of Middlesex, Berkshire, Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, and Hertfordshire, as well as projecting portions of other counties ranging from one-half of Wiltshire to a mere fragment of Essex. Save for the fortress of Verdun the actual battlefield contained no feature the capture or retention of which would have vitally affected the battle, but it was so diversified in nature as to merit a detailed description.

The eastern strip is, generally speaking, a large cultivated plain, in which the Marne, flowing through a well-marked valley, receives as tributaries the Ourcq and the two Morins. Like the parent river, the tributaries are slow moving and unfordable, but well provided with stone bridges and lined with woods and country houses. Speaking generally, this sector of the battlefield is fairly open; but an exception must be made of the forests of Villers-Cotterêts, and Compiègne, where the paths are intricate and blind, and where a force losing direction might find itself in serious difficulties if attacked. East of this sector is a strip

bounded generally by north and south lines through Soissons and Rheims, and roughly bisected by the course of the River Marne. Generally speaking, the terrain here is a plateau cut by the well-marked Marne valley and marked by copses and plantations which increase in size and frequency towards the east. The eastern edge of the plateau, running from the Montagne de Rheims to the Aisne, and thence to Laon and beyond, forms the line of heights known as Les Falaises de Champagne. Much of the territory in this strip of the battlefield, especially that part of it north of the Marne, presents the appearance of Surrey or Sussex downs. A tactical feature of some importance is the marshland near Sézanne, called Les Marais de Saint-Gond, extending for about ten to twelve miles from east to west, and of a breadth varying from one to two miles. It is formed by a pocket of clay, through which flows the Petit Morin, now a very small stream, which has its springs in the marshland, and the affluents of which have been canalized to prevent flooding. The marshes have been to a large extent reclaimed, and between the acres of grassland the streams run in deep ditches. In fine weather the ground is fairly dry, but in heavy rains the slopes north and south drain down to the pocket, the canalized streams overflow, and the clay soil becomes one vast quagmire. Some narrow causeways have been constructed, but these can be brought under artillery fire, particularly from a round-topped hill at Mondement, which is a valuable tactical feature, and since the causeways are neither engineered nor metalled they are all likely in flood time to become as deep in mud as the adjoining marshes. Passing eastward the third strip of the battlefield is the wide plain, in which lies the large town of Châlons, known as La Champagne Pouilleuse. Here are long undulating ridges covered with heath and crowned on top by small fir

plantations, moorlands with patches of cultivation, and two large training camps north and south of Châlons, the whole forming a fine arena for a conventional battle of the three arms.

East of this immense plain, which may be regarded as the Aldershot and Salisbury Plain of France, the woods become more frequent and dense, meriting in many cases the larger designation of forests. Chief among these is the Forest of Argonne, a long, densely-wooded low ridge running almost north and south, traversed only by a few paths and by two gaps, through which run two high roads and the St. Ménehould—Verdun railway. Between the ridge and the valley of the Meuse lies an upland country chiefly of pasture land intersected by numerous narrow ravines, and on the right bank of the Meuse is the forest region of the Woevre. In this sector of the battlefield is situated the fortress of Verdun, which, although it formed a very sharp salient in the French line, yet by its projection served the useful purpose of dividing the Crown Prince's army into two parts. Unlike Namur and Liége, the fortress had been kept in readiness to resist a sudden attack and contained an adequate garrison, including mobile troops distinct from the field armies. Further, the forts of the perimeter had been supplemented by a network of trenches and outworks pushed well out, which greatly minimized the chance of the fortress being quickly crushed by a concentrated storm of heavy artillery fire.

In spite of the great use which the Germans made of mechanical petrol-driven transport, the retention of Verdun in French hands was a serious handicap to the invaders, for it prevented them making use of the main line of railway running thence to Germany; and the difficulty of communication was aggravated by the fact that when the battle began Maubeuge was still untaken and the main line

of railway from Cologne through Liége and Namur was in consequence blocked. Practically the only line of rail available to supply the one and a quarter to one and a half million Germans deployed along the general line of the Marne was that which ran north from Rheims to Mézières and thence by the valley of the Meuse to Dinant and Namur. In lateral communications, however, the Germans were admirably served, the Meaux—Rheims—Verdun and Meaux —Châlons—Verdun railways affording them the means of transferring troops from one portion of the battlefield to another at will. The suddenness and impetuosity of the Allies' attack, however, was to render the advantage a theoretical rather than an actual benefit.

Speaking generally, the roads within the area forming the battlefield are good, and this applies to the lesser by-roads as well as to the main routes. In many cases the latter are fringed with the tall trees so characteristic of French roads, a factor which was not without military importance in view of the excellent ranging marks thus afforded for artillery fire. The woods with which the country abounds have mostly a thick undergrowth, which renders them a distinct obstacle to attacking troops, but such undergrowth is not to be found to quite the same extent in the larger forests. A marked distinction between the battlefield and a corresponding area of English country is the almost total absence of the hedgerows so distinctive of rural England. This factor gave great freedom of movement and was on the whole in favour of the attacking side.

Such was the setting for the great struggle which was now to open. The field was worthy of such a contest. It had witnessed the most brilliant efforts of Napoleon's strategy, and had been the scene of two decisive battles of the world. At Valmy in 1792 the elder Kellerman had stemmed the tide of invasion on the very day when France

first declared herself a republic. Thirteen centuries earlier at Châlons the Roman general Aetius had driven back the Huns when under Attila the torrent of their arms was directed west and south, and their myriads marched under the guidance of one master-mind to the overthrow of the new and old powers of the world.

Operations of the 5th September.—Although the battle proper was not timed by General Joffre to begin until the morning of the 6th, the 5th September was not without incident. During the day columns of the German Ist Army were observed by airmen to be still crossing the Marne at various points such as Trilport, La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, Nogent, and as far east as Château Thierry. General von Kluck's scouts scoured the country far and wide, questioning such inhabitants as still remained in their homes, and penetrating, with cyclist patrols, to within a few hundred yards of the French outposts at Claye, some ten miles from Paris. Northward Luzarches is said to have been the high-water mark of the German cavalry advance, but east and south-east of Paris the Uhlans rode far and wide, even, it is believed, reaching the Seine through a gap in the Allied line. During the day contact between French and German troops took place generally on the line Dammartin—Meaux, the inhabitants of the latter town being startled by the sound of artillery about 1.30 p.m. and by the appearance of German cavalry in the streets. The first shot of the battle seems to have been fired by a German battery from the high ground by Monthyon, almost exactly at midday against a French battery posted near Iverny. Along the line Montgé—Monthyon—Penchard fighting took place, and by nightfall houses and farms in flames marked the edge of the battle. Generally speaking, these were, however, but skirmishes between the covering troops on the opposing sides, for the French

6th Army was not yet ready to initiate a decisive attack, and the German Ist Army was still in the act of movement across the Allied front.[1]

On the other side of the Marne the British Army had only small combats with General von Kluck's advanced troops and patrols, while further to the east the French 5th Army maintained a severe artillery fire upon the Germans west of Sézanne. This was followed up after darkness had set in by a French attack, which resulted in three villages being taken at the point of the bayonet. Beyond this and north of the line Sézanne—Fère Champenoise—Sommesous the 9th Army was engaged in local fighting with the left of the German IInd Army and the Saxon troops of General von Hausen, in which the advantage lay with the French. The 4th Army had by this time evacuated Vitry-le-François to occupy the heights further south, and repulsed during the day a reconnaissance carried out by German cavalry. Further still to the right was the French 3rd Army on the line Revigny—Souilly, and with its headquarters at Ligny-en-Barrois, which was disposed from left to right as follows : The 7th Cavalry Division was in touch with the 4th Army ; in the centre lay what was left of the 6th Corps, and a reserve brigade of the 54th Division, while the 65th, 67th, and 75th Reserve Divisions carried on the line to the right.

Opposite this army was the bulk of the Crown Prince's

[1] There is some discrepancy in the various accounts consulted as to the exact task and action of the 6th Army on the 5th September. According to *La Renaissance* of the 2nd September, 1916, the right wing of the 6th Army during the afternoon of the 5th September, attacked and took Montgé, Plessis-au-Bois, Charny and Villeroy *selon les ordres de la veille*. But those orders, on being consulted, will be found strictly to limit the 6th Army to the task merely of getting into a position of readiness to attack on the 6th September. If the 6th Army was really seriously engaged on the afternoon of the 5th September such action was apparently in opposition to the spirit, if not to the letter, of the orders received by its commander.

Vth Army, which during the day gained ground towards the east, so that its dislocation was as follows: The VIth Corps was on the line Charmontois—Triaucourt, while in the latter village and extending eastward to Evres was the XIIIth; with the XVIth Corps echelonned behind towards Froidos. The Crown Prince, assuming apparently that the French 3rd Army was only making a temporary stand, determined to keep up the pursuit, and issued orders during the afternoon of the 5th for an offensive movement on the following day, the objective being the line Revigny—Bar-le-Duc. The attack was to be covered by several cavalry divisions,[1] which were to push on far to the south with their left on Belfort and was to be supported by the German IVth Army; especially by its XVIIIth Corps, which was disposed about the village of St. Mard and to the north of it. In order to prevent this forward movement from being interfered with, by a possible attack in rear by mobile troops from Verdun, the VIth Reserve Corps, which was about Montfaucon, was to hold a line running from near Souilly, through Avocourt, to the Meuse.

Orders to the British Army.—In accordance with the instructions given him by General Joffre during the day Sir John French issued Operation Order No. 17 at 5.30 p.m., of which the tenor was as follows:—

(1) The enemy has apparently abandoned the idea of advancing on Paris and is contracting his front and moving south-east.

(2) The army will advance eastward with a view to attacking.

Its left will be covered by the French 6th Army, also marching east, and its right will be linked to the French 5th Army marching north.

[1] Apparently from the IVth as well as the Vth Army.

(3) In pursuance of the above the following moves will take place, the army facing east on completion of the movement :—

First Corps : Right on La Chappelle-Iger, left on Lumigny. Move to be completed 9 a.m.

Second Corps : Right on La Houssaye, left in neighbourhood of Villeneuve. Move to be completed 10 a.m.

Third Corps : Facing east in neighbourhood of Bailly. Move to be completed 10 a.m.

Cavalry Division (less Third and Fifth Brigades) : To guard front and flank of First Corps on the line Jouy-le-Chatel (connecting with French 5th Army)—Coulommiers (connecting with Third and Fifth Brigades).

The Third and Fifth Cavalry Brigades will cease to be under the orders of the First Corps and will act in concert under instructions issued by Brigadier-General Gough. They will cover the Second Corps, connecting with the Cavalry Division on the right and with the French 6th Army on the left.

Orders for the French 3rd and 4th Armies.—In the orders issued by General Joffre on the afternoon of the 4th only the 6th, British, 5th, and 9th Armies had received detailed instructions as to the task before them, but on the 5th supplementary orders were issued, carrying on the scope of operations so as to include the French 3rd and 4th Armies. These orders were received by the armies concerned at about 7 p.m. on the 5th, and ran as follows :—

4th Army.—To-morrow, the 6th September, our left armies will attack the German Ist and IInd Armies in front and flank. The 4th Army will cease its southerly movement and will attack the enemy, co-ordinating its movement with that of the 3rd Army, which will issue

north of Revigny and take the offensive towards the north-west.

3rd Army.—The 3rd Army, covering itself against attack from the north-east, will debouch to the west to attack the left flank of enemy forces marching west of the Argonne. It will co-ordinate its action with that of the 4th Army, which has received orders to attack the enemy.

Summary of the 5th September.—A great encounter battle was about to open, to which the rival commands each looked forward with feelings of confidence. The German General Staff, apparently not well informed as to the whereabouts and mission of the French 6th Army, and completely deceived as to the *moral* of the British forces, viewed with some complacency the fact that the enemy was brought to bay and at last forced to accept battle.[1] The appearance of the French line, as traced upon German staff maps, must have seemed to warrant the hope that a decision could be quickly reached. That line was indeed an inviting one to attack, for as a corollary to the supposition that no serious attempt could be made from Paris and that the British Army was, temporarily at least, out of action, followed the assumption that the effective French left flank was probably somewhere near Courtaçon. From there the line sagged slightly south below Vitry-le-François, bulging north again in an immense salient to Verdun, whence it fell away south-eastwards past Nancy and then in a more southerly direction to the Swiss frontier. From the German point of view the possibility of outflanking the supposed French left, while at the same time piercing the line below Verdun with the VIth and VIIth Armies,

[1] Whether the German General Staff were ignorant of the position of the French 6th Army, or whether they simply underrated it, or whether they imagined that it would be tied to Paris, is further discussed in Chapter XVI.

aided by mobile troops from Metz, must have seemed to hold out chances of another and more splendid Sedan. If the German Ist Army could " make a flank " at Courtaçon, by brushing aside the supposedly beaten British Army, General von Kluck was well placed to roll up the French left. And were this to be supplemented by the piercing of the French line at Nancy it would have been exceedingly difficult for the sector of French front which projected north to Verdun to have escaped the jaws of the vice which would close upon it.

General Joffre, on his part, was certainly under no illusions as to the strategic awkwardness of his general line, and could not but have been aware of the dangers to which he would be exposed were his line to give way on the Grand Couronné de Nancy. But he had good ground for supposing that the worst was over in that region, and for realizing that the corps which had broken at Morhange had recovered its lost *moral*. He could fortify himself with the recollection that only portions of the troops engaged in that battle had given way, and that the other corps had covered the retreat of their broken comrades in a masterly manner; also that the men of one of these corps—the 20th—were recruited on the Lorraine border and might thus reasonably be trusted to fight to the last man in what was literally a battle for their hearths and homes. But what must have filled him above all with confidence was the probability that General de Castelnau at Nancy would be able to hold his own at any rate until the French 6th Army could strike, and strike hard, on General von Kluck's exposed flank. A victory on the Ourcq would be felt on the Grand Couronné ; and should the German Ist Army be forced to seek refuge by a movement eastward or northward, there was every chance that such retreat would drag all the German armies, as far east as Verdun, in its train, and that the attack on Nancy, when

once the whole German line west of Verdun would have swung back, would be robbed of much of its significance.

While the generals in the field were putting the final touches to their arrangements for the great enterprise on the Marne, the Foreign Offices of the Allies had been busy on an agreement which was to bind them in even closer bonds and to provide a surer guarantee of ultimate victory. It ran as follows :—

"The British, French, and Russian Governments mutually engage not to conclude peace separately during the present war. The three Governments agree that when terms of peace come to be discussed no one of the Allies will consider the conditions of peace without the previous agreement of each of the other Allies."

The copy which was drawn up in London was dated the 5th September and bore the signatures of the British Foreign Secretary and the French and Russian Ambassadors. It was a fitting prologue to the great piece that had now been staged.

CHAPTER X

THE BATTLE OF THE MARNE (*continued*)
OPERATIONS OF THE 6TH SEPTEMBER

Maps 7, 2, 5.

Orders of the day to the French, British, and German Armies.—Both sides fully realized the importance of the battle which was now opening, and, by proclamations circulated among the troops, the higher commands strove to bring the urgency of the issue clearly before the rank and file. The order of the day drawn up by the French generalissimo is couched in somewhat unconventional terms. Apart from the absence of the customary references to the defence of home and country it was remarkable for its curt, peremptory, and almost menacing tone. It ran as follows :—

" At the moment when a battle, on which depends the welfare of the country, is about to begin, I have to remind all ranks that the time for looking back is past. Every effort must be made to attack the enemy and hurl him back. Troops which find advance impossible must stand their ground at all costs and die rather than give way. This is a moment when no faltering will be tolerated."

The tone of this brief document is curiously at variance with the dramatic appeals to national sentiment, and to the stirring recollection of bygone victories by which, at critical moments, orders of the day to French armies are

usually characterized. Coming as it did from a southerner its bluntness is the more remarkable. It was, however, characteristic of the temperament of General Joffre, who probably realized that the unflinching faith which the French armies reposed in him required no artificial stimulant.

More cheerful in tone was the order of the day issued by the British commander-in-chief, who wrote :—

"After a most trying series of operations, mostly in retirement, which have been rendered necessary by the general strategic plan of the Allied Armies, the British forces stand to-day formed in line with their French comrades, ready to attack the enemy. Foiled in their attempt to invest Paris, the Germans have been driven to move in an easterly and south-easterly direction, with the apparent intention of falling in strength on the French 5th Army. In this operation they are exposing their right flank and their line of communications to an attack by the combined French 6th Army and the British forces. I call upon the British Army in France to show now to the enemy its power, and to push on vigorously to the attack beside the French 6th Army. I am sure I shall not call upon it in vain ; but that, on the contrary, by another manifestation of the magnificent spirit they have shown in the past fortnight, they will fall on the enemy's flank with all their strength, and in unison with their Allies drive them back."

It will be noticed that, unlike General Joffre, Field-Marshal Sir John French was at pains to explain to his troops the favourable strategic situation which had suddenly developed, and to point out how victory could be snatched from it, while expressing his conviction that his troops would respond to his appeal.

On the German side an order of the day was found later at Vitry-le-François amongst the papers of General Tulff von Tscheppe, commanding the VIIIth Corps, and a comparison of its contents with those already quoted is of interest. The German order was as follows :—

"The object of our long and arduous marches has been achieved. The main French forces, after a protracted retreat, have been forced to accept battle. The great decision is unquestionably at hand. To-morrow, therefore, the whole German Army, as well as our own corps, will be engaged everywhere on the line Paris—Verdun. To save the welfare and honour of Germany I expect every officer and man, notwithstanding the hard and heroic fighting of these last days, to do his duty unswervingly and to the last breath. Everything depends on the result of to-morrow."

Although, for purposes of comparison, it has been found convenient to reproduce this order immediately after those issued by the French and British higher commands, it must be stated that the German order of the day was issued, apparently, not on the early morning of the 6th, but at 10 p.m. on the 7th September. By that time, as will be seen, the situation had altered somewhat to the disadvantage of the invaders and probably accounts for the tinge of pessimism which is clearly shown in the concluding part of the German document.[1]

The advance of the French 6th Army against the German right.—Although some fighting had taken place throughout the 5th on the line Dammartin—Meaux, the battle proper may be said to have begun at dawn on Sunday, the

[1] Although the balance of evidence is in favour of the theory that this German order was issued at 10 p.m. on the 7th September, the phrase "To-morrow . . . the whole German Army . . . will be engaged everywhere on the line Paris—Verdun" certainly lends colour to the suggestion that the order was drawn up some time on the 5th.

6th of September, a dawn which gave promise of a day of almost tropical heat. The French 6th Army had as its task to force the passage of the River Ourcq between Lizy and Neufchelles[1] and to make for Château Thierry, a movement which was practically tantamount to an order to attack the flank and rear of the German Ist Army.[2] At daybreak the French troops marched out, the 6th Army acting in two wings, of which the right was formed by the Reserve Corps (55th and 56th Reserve Divisions) under General Lamaze,[3] while the left consisted of General Vauthier's 7th Corps. To take the Reserve Corps first, it had on the previous evening been forced to give ground slightly and to fall back upon the position it had occupied on the morning of the 5th, that is to say, the line Cuisy—Iverny—Neufmontiers. From this line early on the morning of the 6th this wing was once more set in motion, the Germans, who were apparently unprepared for such an onslaught, being attacked on the rolling hills round Monthyon and Penchard. By this time the 45th Division, consisting, it would appear, of Zouave troops, had come up

[1] In the Operation Orders of General Joffre issued on the 4th September (see p. 122) the sector of the River Ourcq to be attacked was given as Lizy—May-en-Multien. The fact that the 4th Corps and 45th Division had, since that date, become available as possible reinforcements probably caused the frontage to be somewhat extended. The operations of the French 6th Army during the battle of the Marne are often treated of as a separate, though contributory, battle under the designation of the battle of the Ourcq.

[2] The position of the German Ist Army at the time was as follows:—

The IVth Reserve Corps was west of the Ourcq on the line Marcilly—Barcy—Penchard.

The IInd Corps was astride of the Grand Morin on the line Monthérand—Faremoutiers—St. Augustin.

The IVth Corps carried on the line from Beautheil to Chevru.

The IIIrd Corps was still further to the south-east on the line Cerneux—Montceaux-le-Provins—Courgivaux.

The IXth Corps was echelonned north of Esternay.

Two cavalry divisions (one, the Guard Cavalry Division, from the IInd Army) were between the IIIrd and IVth Corps.

[3] The Moorish Brigade was attached to this corps and was on its right.

into line and was acting on the left flank of the Reserve Corps, while on the other flank connection with the British forces was maintained by some territorial brigades and by portion of the 1st Cavalry Corps,[1] this connection being further strengthened by the arrival of the 8th Division of the 4th Corps on the left bank of the Marne between Varreddes and Meaux during the forenoon. It will be remembered how the 4th Corps had been detached from the 3rd Army to reinforce the 6th, but owing to delays en route it had not been able to join up during the 5th September.[2] Now, the 8th Division was in position south of the Marne, with the remainder of the corps either at Gagny or en route thither from the east.

Although the units of the German IVth Reserve Corps seem to have been taken by surprise by the vigour of the French attack they nevertheless put up a very stubborn resistance in the local engagements which signalized the day's fighting in this portion of the field. The Germans had posted batteries of heavy guns on the reverse slopes of a plateau at Trocy, and these, being out of range of the French 75's, caused very heavy losses to the attackers. The French artillery, however, made short work of the German field guns posted right and left of the Meaux—Soissons road and on a smaller elevation above the village of Etrépilly. The village of Barcy was very heavily shelled throughout the day and was reduced to ruins before being taken towards evening by a battalion of *chasseurs-à-pied.* Here fell Major d'Urbal, of the 2nd Zouaves, brother of General d'Urbal—his grave dug by the shell which caused his death,[3] and on the ground which sloped

[1] See, however, footnote, p. 148.

[2] The railways had been seriously congested by a great exodus from Paris since the 1st September.

[3] According to other accounts he was killed by a bullet on another day of the battle.

towards the Ourcq French and German dead lay in hundreds, in some cases the foes transfixed with bayonets as they had fallen fighting. The day had been one of frequent hand-to-hand encounters, but when darkness fell General Lamaze's corps had gained several miles of ground and was in occupation of the line Chambry — Barcy — Marcilly.

While the French Reserve Corps was thus making headway to the east, the 7th Corps on its left was attacking the line Marcilly—Acy-en-Multien. At daybreak it had seized the village of St. Soupplets, and was able to push on with considerable speed, for practically the whole of the German IVth Reserve Corps was held by General Lamaze's troops on the right; part of it was, however, falling back in a north-easterly direction towards Acy-en-Multien. The commander of the German corps had not been slow to realize that the fighting which developed was something far different from a mere affair of advanced troops and had, early in the morning, sent off to General von Kluck urgent appeals for assistance. The latter replied by sending all, or a portion, of the IInd Corps to his subordinate's aid, and as early as 10 a.m. two German columns were observed by the French coming up from the south and heading towards the bridges at Varreddes and Lizy. One of these columns seems to have passed in rear of the front held by the German IVth Reserve Corps with the intention of emerging on its right flank,[1] but the French 7th Corps had not been idle, and by evening its left had swung forward as far as Etavigny, whence the line ran through Pusieux until it joined up with the right wing about Marcilly. During the day General von Kluck continued to send off further reinforcements to deal with

[1] Each column apparently consisted of a division. The other column reinforced the left of the IVth Reserve Corps.

what was an obvious peril to his right flank, but these columns had now to run the gauntlet of the French 8th Division, which was south of the Marne. Towards evening some stiff fighting, in consequence, took place in the Meaux woods, with the result that the German columns were delayed in their crossing of the Marne, and the day closed on a distinct tactical success for the French 6th Army.[1]

The British Army gains ground.—The effect produced upon the British Army by the unexpected opportunity of retaliating upon the enemy who had hustled it since the 23rd August is vividly described by a young officer who wrote: "On Sunday, September the 6th, after a good night's rest, we had breakfast at 6 a.m. and marched off at 7 a.m. To our surprise and great joy we found we were moving in a northerly direction instead of the usual southerly trek. What a difference it made; it was clear to everyone that we were advancing at last, and a cloud, both mental and physical, seemed to be lifted from us. Yesterday we had plodded along in silence, like men who had an unpleasant job to do, which had to be done, and yet not quite knowing why. To-day we seemed to swing

[1] It is not clear what part the French 1st Cavalry Corps under General Sordet played in the day's fighting. No mention of it is made in such French official narratives as have been published, nor in *La Bataille de la Marne* by Gustave Babin, nor in *La Bataille de l'Ourcq* by Gervais Courtellemont. According to *Les Batailles de la Marne* by P. Fabreguettes, the 1st Cavalry Corps was maintaining connection with the Allies at Villiers-sur-Marne. That village, however, is actually within the enceinte of Paris and, therefore, a considerable distance from the battle-front. Possibly Villiers-sur-Morin is meant; but it will be remembered that the 1st Cavalry Corps had retreated as far as the south bank of the Seine (see p. 125), and it is practically certain that almost the whole of it was still there on the 6th September. Sir John French, in his dispatch of 17th September, 1914, when giving the position of the French and German armies on the evening of the 6th, makes no mention of the 1st Cavalry Corps upon his left, though he gives some prominence to the fact that the 2nd Cavalry Corps was on his right.

along: there was laughter and talking in the ranks: we knew what we were after and meant to get some of our own back." [1]

Just before sunset on the previous evening large bivouacs of the enemy had been observed by British patrols in the neighbourhood of Coulommiers, Rebais, La Ferté-Gaucher, and Dagny, so that some stiff fighting was expected on the 6th. Early in the morning a severe artillery fire was opened by the German guns, and about noon the British advanced guards were engaged with a cavalry division and the advanced guards of the German Ist Army, which were well supported by batteries of artillery. By this time the British had slightly altered their position and had occupied the line Jouy-le-Châtel—Faremoutiers—Villeneuve-le-Comte. It was about this hour, in the opinion of Sir John French, that the movements of the British, combined with the advance of the French 6th Army, north of the Marne towards the Ourcq, brought home unmistakably to the German higher command the serious nature of the threat against their right flank. It is, at any rate, certain that early in the afternoon there was a noticeable slackening in the efforts of the German Ist Army to push south and east, due, of course, to the steps which General von Kluck had to take to support his IVth Reserve Corps on the Ourcq. This hesitation was soon followed by an unmistakable retrograde movement. The German IVth Corps, which during the morning had been operating east of Vaudoy, working generally south, suspended its march and repassed the Grand Morin at Coulommiers—where General von Kluck had established his headquarters—en route for Rebais. The British lost no time in seizing the heights on the Grand Morin, west of Coulommiers, from which the

[1] *Blackwood's Magazine*, February, 1915. "Diary of a Subaltern. IV. The Advance."

German heavy guns had during the morning brought an effective fire to bear, and by evening their general front lay astride the Grand Morin and on the line Dagny—south of Coulommiers—Maisoncelles.[1] On the whole the British troops saw but little fighting throughout the day, though a few prisoners and some machine guns were taken.[2]

Operations of the French 5th Army.—In the orders issued by General Joffre on the 4th the 5th Army of General Franchet d'Esperey had been ordered to close slightly to its left and to take up the general line Courtaçon —Esternay—Sézanne so as to be ready to attack in a northerly direction. Some progress had been made in accordance with these orders on the 5th. On the 6th September the mission of the 5th Army was to attack, in the general direction of Montmirail with its right wing thrown forward, which was an operation designed to coincide with the advance of the 6th Army on the Ourcq and to aim at enclosing the whole of the Ist and portion of the IInd Army of the Germans. General Franchet d'Esperey sent his army forward at dawn. It was disposed from left to right thus, the 18th Corps, 3rd Corps, 1st Corps, 10th Corps, with the Reserve Divisions in second line. Immediately a violent battle developed all along

[1] The Official Dispatches give the British line on the evening of the 6th "roughly as follows": Dagny—Coulommiers—Maison (Maisoncelles, or La Haute Maison ?), but this can only refer to advanced detachments, such as scouts, etc. Later official sources give the position of the British Army as follows:—

Cavalry, Le Corbier; Jouy-le-Châtel; Lumigny.

First Corps, Vaudoy—Touquin—Pezarches.

Second Corps, Faremoutiers—Hautefeuille—Lumigny (*Third Division*); Mortcerf (*Fifth Division*).

Third Corps, Villers-sur-Morin—Villeneuve-le-Comte.

[2] The position of the German Ist Army at nightfall was as follows: IVth Reserve Corps and IInd Corps east and west of the Ourcq. IXth Cavalry Division west of Crécy. IInd Cavalry Division north of Coulommiers. IVth Corps, Rebais. IIIrd and IXth Corps south-west of Montmirail.

the line, due to the fact that the Germans had also received orders to advance and thus precipitated an encounter battle. In the fighting which ensued the French showed themselves undoubted masters of the enemy. On the left the 18th Corps seized Courtaçon during the day. It was assisted by General Conneau's 2nd Cavalry Corps, which was operating on the left flank and maintaining touch with the British Army, a task which it performed admirably, finally halting for the night on a line east and west through Choisy. In the centre, after a particularly fierce artillery preparation, the 3rd Corps seized the villages of Montceaux-les-Provins and Courgivaux. On the right the 1st Corps, by sending some guns to enfilade the German defences from the east of Esternay, gained possession of Châtillon-sur-Morin, which had defied their efforts for several hours. So fierce had been the fighting there that General von Bülow had summoned the Xth Reserve Corps, which was in reserve near Montmirail. Yet even with this reinforcement opposed to them the French were not to be denied, and after darkness had set in they continued their efforts, eventually clearing the Germans out of Esternay. From here the 10th Corps carried on the line, with its right thrown well forward, and that flank gained touch with the 42nd and Moorish Divisions of the 9th Army at Villeneuve-lez-Charleville.

The fighting round Sézanne had been long and bitter. The Germans had placed many machine guns in position, and they thoroughly searched the wooded ridges, from which the French attack was expected to develop, with artillery fire. The French guns replied, and an artillery duel went on for some hours, until it seemed that the German guns had been silenced and that it was time for the French infantry to go forward. Against the green background the attackers showed up like scarlet waves as they moved

on with the bayonet, and with such a target the German machine guns were able to do great execution. The French fell "like corn before the sickle," and to complete their discomfiture many were killed by the fire of their own artillery, the 63rd Regiment suffering severely in this way. However, about 6 p.m. the Germans withdrew in good order, but one battery did not receive the order to retire, and its isolated position soon brought a murderous cross fire to bear upon it. The unequal duel continued for some time; it was only towards evening that the guns were silenced, but not before every gunner had fallen, killed or wounded.[1] The check to the French had only been temporary, and after a day of brilliant fighting the front of the 5th Army may be said to have been marked by the line Courtaçon—Esternay—Villeneuve-lez-Charleville.

The French 9th Army.—Following the course of the day's fighting from west to east, the sector of the battlefield is now reached where the new 9th Army, under General Foch, had been put in to strengthen the centre of the line. Generally speaking, its task for the 6th was to support the advance of the 5th Army with its left flank (which for this purpose had been pushed forward as far as Talus) while maintaining a watching attitude along the rest of its front. In accordance with this general idea its commander had issued operation orders on the 5th September, of which the following was the tenor :—

The 42nd and Moorish Divisions, leaving their positions at Villeneuve-lez-Charleville, Montdement, and Talus, were to co-operate with the advance of the 10th Corps of the 5th Army towards Montmirail and the east of that town

[1] This account of the fighting round Sézanne is from Anton Fendrich, *Von der Marneschlacht bis zum Fall Antwerpens.* The date there given is the 8th September, which is obviously wrong, and the 6th is probably the correct date.

by developing an attack along the line Vauchamps—Janvillers.

The 9th Corps, which occupied a position about Fère-Champenoise, was to take up a defensive position along the southern edge of the marshes of St. Gond, while maintaining strong advanced guards, north of the marshes, which were to be ready, if required, to move upon Champaubert.

The 11th Corps, which was distributed in the triangle Lenharée—Semoine—Sommesous, was to take up a defensive position, facing north-east, with its right on the first-mentioned village and its left on the eastern edge of the marshes of St. Gond beyond Ecury-le-Repos.

The 9th Cavalry Division was to cover the right flank about Vatry.

Although General Foch had the advantage of operating against the wings of two separate German armies[1] he found himself quite unable to carry out even the moderate programme he had drawn up. Early in the morning the Germans attacked with considerable vigour all along the line, and so far from the 42nd and Moorish Divisions being able to gain ground at the north-west, they were forced to abandon Talus to the Xth Corps of the German IInd Army and they only managed to hold on to Villeneuve-lez-Charleville with some difficulty. The advanced guards of the 9th Corps fared no better against the left wing of the Xth Corps, and the Guard Corps of the IInd Army, for they were driven in from their line north of the marshes and forced to fall back on the main body of the corps, which, however, by holding the exits was able to maintain its position without difficulty. Further to the east the

[1] The left of the German IInd Army and the right of the German IIIrd Army.

11th Corps was violently assailed by the XIIth Saxon Corps of the German IIIrd Army and had to swing back its left and take up a position with that flank in the woods south of Ecury-le-Repos, while east of Vatry the 9th Cavalry Division was engaged throughout the day by Saxon cavalry. The close of the day's fighting found the French 9th Army on the line Villeneuve-lez-Charleville—southern edge of the marshes—Lenharée, in touch with the Germans all along the line, except where the marshes separated the two fronts.

The French 4th Army.—Generally speaking, as the fighting rolled eastward it became more desperate in character, and while the Allied left had been able to move appreciably forward the French armies on the right had grave difficulty in holding their own. According to the orders received, the French 4th Army was to endeavour to make headway against the enemy, co-ordinating its movements with the 3rd Army on its right, which, issuing north of Revigny, was to attack towards the west. The 4th Army, however, was not very favourably placed to assume the offensive, for although it was in touch with the 3rd Army on its right, there was a wide gap between its left at Humbauville and the right of General Foch's 9th Army at Lenharée, which was only imperfectly filled by the 9th Cavalry Division. Nevertheless the 4th Army met with some measure of success. On the left the 17th Corps, advancing from the line Humbauville—Vitry-le-François, was able, while pivoting its right on the latter town, to swing forward its left and to drive back portions of the XIXth Saxon Corps while doing so. The advance had been preceded by an artillery duel, in which the German heavy guns posted on the heights north of Vitry-le-François endeavoured to crush the French 75's hidden on the opposite slopes. In the centre the 22nd (Colonial) Corps held its ground

stoutly though heavily attacked, and later in the day was even able to make some progress. On the right, between Etrépy and Sermaize, the 2nd Corps was called upon to deal with a most violent attempt on the part of the Duke of Würtemberg's IVth Army to pierce the French line, but even here, although the French could claim no advance, they held their own and beat off the attack.

The French 3rd Army.—To follow out the orders of the generalissimo issued on the 4th General Sarrail commanding the 3rd Army had a threefold duty to perform. He had to maintain touch with the fortress of Verdun upon his right; to act in conjunction with the 4th Army on his left; and to attack the left flank of the Crown Prince's Vth Army as it marched south. To effect this General Sarrail issued orders to the following effect, working from left to right:—

The 7th Cavalry Division was to move to Lisle-en-Barrois.[1]

The 5th Corps was to swing forward its left (from the neighbourhood of Revigny) and to attack the line Laheycourt—Villotte-devant-Louppy.

The 6th Corps was to attack along the line Nubécourt—Sommaisne.

The Reserve Divisions were to take post as follows: Two divisions were to be at Souilly, to the right rear of the 6th Corps; one division in reserve at Chaumont-sur-Aire; the brigade of the 54th Reserve Division about Rembercourt-aux-Pots.

The 72nd Reserve Division, belonging to Verdun, would

[1] The main duty of the 7th Cavalry Division was apparently to fill the gap in the line between the 5th Corps and the Reserve Brigade about Rembercourt-aux-Pots. It is probable that the connection between the 5th Corps and the 2nd Corps (of the 4th Army) was carried out by the corps cavalry of those units.

be sent to Souhesme-la-Grande by the fortress commandant to support the right flank.

The 15th Corps was on its way from the 2nd Army, about Nancy, and its arrival south-east of Bar-le-Duc might be looked for on the 7th.

As has been narrated in the previous chapter, the Crown Prince had also, on his part, issued orders during the afternoon of the previous day for an advance upon the 6th with Revigny and Bar-le-Duc as the objectives, and, after a peaceful night, collision took place between the opposing armies about seven o'clock in the morning. The French 5th Corps, on the left, managed to reach Laheycourt with its left flank. But it was dislodged from that village by the German VIth Corps, which emerged from the woods to the north of it, and the French were forced back to Laimont, against which the Germans opened a severe artillery fire. Revigny then fell into their hands, and the French 5th Corps was ordered to hold the line Laimont—Villotte-devant-Louppy at all costs. The French 9th Cavalry Division and the reserve troops about Rembercourt-aux-Pots were also engaged throughout the day, but, apparently, the attack was not pushed home with much vigour by the Germans. Further to the French right the 6th Corps endeavoured to carry out its attack on the line Sommaisne—Nubécourt, but except upon the left it could make no progress, or if it did it lost the ground gained before evening. Beyond this corps, however, the 72nd Reserve Division from Verdun achieved some success, for it was able to make headway south-west of its destination, Souhesme-la-Grande, in which operation it was able to do some damage to German convoys which were observed moving across its front; the accession of this division enabled General Sarrail's right flank to be well *en potence*.

The line of the 3rd Army at the end of the day ran from Vassincourt on the left (south of the Marne and Rhine Canal), through Villotte-devant-Louppy, Sommaisne, and St. André to Osches, where it bore sharply to the north-west, the extreme right being at the village of Ville-sur-Cousances.

The Battle of the Grand Couronne de Nancy.—Although the fighting round Nancy was, in a sense, distinct from and —to a certain extent—overshadowed by the great battle of the Marne, the two battles reacted upon each other to a remarkable extent. Each was an indispensable factor of the homogeneous plans of the German invasion on the one part and of the French defence upon the other. Had Nancy fallen the battle of the Marne might never have been fought, or, if it had, its whole course might have been altered. A defeat of the French round the city would certainly have enabled the bulk of the German VIth and VIIth Armies to have worked round in rear of General Sarrail's 3rd Army, which had all it could do to hold off the Vth Army of the Crown Prince. In that event the Germans would, indeed, have been forced to deal with two obstacles, the fortress of Toul and the River Meuse. But Toul had been seriously weakened by the withdrawal of part of its garrison to reinforce the Grand Couronné, and, what was more serious, many of its guns had also been transferred thither to deal with the German heavy artillery. Namur and Liége had shown how quickly fortresses might be reduced provided that the attack included sufficiently heavy guns. And as regards the Meuse the Germans had already forced the passage of that river, where it was also a formidable obstacle, without great loss. That the importance attached by German Head-quarters to the capture of Nancy was very great is shown by the fact that the German Emperor, about this time,

betook himself in person to that portion of the field. Doubtless the prospect of a somewhat theatrical entry into the place at the head of the White Cuirassiers of the Guard appealed to the Emperor's taste for the dramatic, but it must be admitted that a great German victory on the threshold of the fortress barrier of France would have justified an ornate celebration.

To revert to the actual fighting, the story of the battle of the Grand Couronné has been brought up to the end of August in a previous chapter. By that time it had been brought home to both sides that the key of the position was the plateau of Amance, which was barely six miles from the outskirts of Nancy, and the subsequent course of the battle was directed to the defending or gaining this particular point. True to their usual methods the Germans made great use of heavy guns to beat down the defence, opening a heavy bombardment on the 1st September, which was to last a whole week and to culminate in the pomp and circumstance of a parade attack carried out by the Emperor's order and under his own eye.[1] During this period the German aircraft were extensively employed locating the French artillery, and with such success that on the 4th some French artillerymen had temporarily to abandon their pieces. Even when the gunners had taken cover below their hill they were again found by the aeroplanes and shelled out of their hiding-places, but the guns were subsequently found to be undamaged and before long were in action once again. The French higher command was, however, in no way perturbed by this outburst of activity on the part of the enemy, and on the 4th, though the battle was still far from won, the situation seemed so favourable as to justify the transference of the 15th Corps to the Argonne to assist the 3rd Army in its struggle against

[1] This attack took place on the 8th. See p. 194.

the Crown Prince.[1] This was the corps which had undergone such an unfortunate experience in the battle of Morhange, but since August 25th it had fought with extraordinary bravery and its recovery after momentary failure was typical of the invincible spirit of the French armies, which was to be such a conspicuous feature of the war.

Summary of the 6th September.—As the reports from the various sectors of the Allied line came in during the night of the 6th–7th September, General Joffre must have felt that the tide had at last turned. Nowhere had the Allies been actually worsted, and, although in some places ground had to be yielded, such loss was more than compensated by gains in other portions of the line. The right flank at Nancy was holding firmly to the Grand Couronné, and upon the left, where the French generalissimo was delivering the decisive blow, the result had been very favourable indeed. It is a question, however, whether the attack of the French 6th Army was not a little premature. For when General Lamaze's Reserve Corps, which formed the right wing of that army, attacked the German IVth Reserve Corps north of Meaux, the rest of General von Kluck's Ist Army was not sufficiently involved south of the Marne to forbid his breaking off the fight in that portion of the field and reinforcing the corps which was west of the Ourcq. Possibly, however, the skill with which General von Kluck carried out this complicated manœuvre has had the effect of concealing the difficulties in which the German Ist Army must really have found itself. It has been suggested that, had the French 6th Army only momentarily restrained its ardour, much greater results would have been achieved, but the final paragraph of General Joffre's Operation Orders of the 4th

[1] It did not, however, come into line with the 3rd Army until the evening of the 7th September. See p. 170.

September certainly seems to justify the 6th Army in pushing forward at daybreak on the 6th as it did.[1] If blame is to be attributed to anyone it must be the French generalissimo.

But it would be absurd indeed to criticise a commander for failing to foresee how far an opposing army might, by a given hour, have penetrated into a trap which had been set for it. No staff calculations of time and space could possibly have ensured a correct solution of a problem so delicate. It may be, and possibly is, true that greater success might have been achieved had the French 6th Army stayed its hand for a few hours, but it was Frederick the Great who said that, if we knew as much before a great battle as we do after it, every one of us would be a great general.

Two points will arrest the attention of the student of this day's fighting on the Marne. The first is the absence of any General Reserve under the immediate control of the higher command on either side. But the question arises whether a single General Reserve can be effectively employed in a battle fought on this gigantic scale and covering so great an extent of country. The presence of a great German strategic reserve, on this day, drawn up in échelon to the left rear of von Kluck, and thrust forward at an early hour when his army was first getting into difficulties, might have saved the situation for the invaders, and it might even have altered the whole history of the war. But it does not follow that, supposing a German General Reserve to have existed, the higher command would necessarily have disposed it in this particular locality, and had it been posted further to the east it could not

[1] For these Operation Orders see p. 122. In the original the final paragraph ran: "3°. L'offensive sera prise par ces différentes armées le 6 Septembre dès le matin."

have done much to relieve von Kluck. A German General Reserve located more in the centre of the long field of battle might have made the situation somewhat awkward for General Foch, who, as it was, was unable to make progress and might have suffered a reverse had stronger forces been opposed to him. But if a considerable fraction of the whole German army on the western front had been employed to act as a General Reserve, the invading forces in immediate contact with the French would have been by so much weaker and they would have been by so much more likely to meet with defeat—a defeat which the General Reserve could only have converted into victory in that sector near to which it happened to be placed. The truth is that the rival hosts were both covering a greater extent of front than they had sufficient troops for, and that neither side could afford to detail a General Reserve.

The other point which deserves a word of notice is the apparently complete absence of shock action by the cavalry on either side. The sabres of the three armies must have run into scores of thousands. Most of the terrain was not unsuited to cavalry work, and part of it was ideal. Nor was it a question of one army attacking another which had buried itself in deep trenches bristling with barbed wire, for on most parts of the line the operations were of the nature of an encounter battle. The cavalry question will doubtless receive fuller explanation when more complete details of the battle are available for review. Here it is only necessary to draw attention to a point that seems to require elucidation.

CHAPTER XI

THE BATTLE OF THE MARNE (*continued*)
OPERATIONS OF THE 7TH SEPTEMBER

Maps 7, 2

The fighting on the Ourcq.—General Maunoury had seen enough on the previous day to convince him that General von Kluck had taken alarm and that large forces from the German Ist Army were streaming back across the Marne, heading for the Ourcq. Consequently it behoved him to press the advantage he had secured on the 6th at the earliest possible moment. For this, reinforcements were already on their way; the 1st Cavalry Corps was moving round to his left[1] and General d'Amade's 61st Reserve Division was being railed from Paris to strengthen the same flank. Accordingly at dawn upon the 7th the 6th Army was again set in motion, and at first some progress was made; but the difficulty of securing a decision soon became evident. The German IVth Corps, which had fallen back the previous evening through Coulommiers and had passed the night near Rebais, recrossed the Marne on the 6th, and, passing over the Ourcq, its leading columns emerged on the plateau of Trocy, where they immediately entrenched. Meanwhile, however, the left wing of the French 6th Army had been vigorously attacking the right of the German

[1] According to some French accounts the 1st Cavalry Corps had, until this day, been resting south of the Seine since the last days of August. See footnote, p. 148.

IVth Reserve Corps, and by four o'clock in the afternoon the French had gained possession of a hill immediately west of Etavigny. About this hour the 61st Reserve Division made its appearance at Villiers-St. Genest, and the 1st Cavalry Corps, which had reached Bargny, began to move eastwards.

The situation, however, began to take a less favourable turn for the French owing to the arrival of further strong German reinforcements. Leaving only his cavalry and IIIrd Corps to deal with the Allies south of the Marne General von Kluck had sent off two more corps—the IInd and IXth—to deal with the threat against his right rear. The IInd Corps, which had apparently re-passed the Marne on the previous evening, crossed the Ourcq and began to debouch near Etavigny and Acy-en-Multien. At the latter village the fighting was especially severe, and, as has so often happened on French battlefields, the cemetery of the place was the scene of most obstinate fighting, five hundred dead bodies being subsequently counted within an area of little more than two hundred square yards. Around the farm of Nogeon, too—about half-way between Vincy and Bouillancy—the battle raged fiercely throughout the day, the buildings changing hands several times before they were reduced to ruins by the German heavy guns near Trocy. By evening the farm was burning fiercely, and the flames, rising from immense barns of wheat, lit up the sky for miles around. Near this farm a French reservist of the 298th Regiment had captured during the day a colour of a battalion of the Magdeburg Fusiliers decorated with the symbol of the Iron Cross.

The IInd Corps once more made its presence felt after nightfall. At about 9.30 p.m. the German firing, which had slackened since eight o'clock, was once more heard towards Etavigny. The rear units of the IInd Corps had come to the

aid of the hardly pressed IVth Reserve Corps and the combat continued fiercely till after midnight.[1] The IXth German Corps, leaving its billets at Montmirail, crossed the Marne at Château Thierry, and pushing north towards Betz and Villiers-St. Genest tried to turn the French left. It was a critical moment, for General Maunoury not only had to cope with this outflanking movement, but had also to hold the Germans elsewhere on his front as well as to keep the 8th Division south of the Marne to maintain touch with the British, and through them with the 5th and other French armies. That division had all day been engaged with German troops, who were occupying the southern edge of the Meaux woods and were thus able to hold the crossings in the wide loop of the river from Trilport to Changis. Into the town of Meaux all day long streams of French wounded were trickling, most of them on foot, for wheeled transport was scarce. From 11 a.m. onward the Germans, probably noting the influx of troops, shelled the town until dusk, but without effecting very serious damage.

Still, the day had not been unfavourable to the French 6th Army. Although General von Kluck had thrust practically all his force against it the 6th Army had actually gained some ground upon its left. It was clear, however, that the vital spot was now the neighbourhood of Betz, towards which large forces of both sides were gravitating or where they had already assembled. On the German side were the IXth Corps, coming from the south, as well as line of communication troops, coming from Creil and Pont-St. Maxence, which had concentrated at Senlis and were now reported to be moving eastward towards Crépy-en-Valois. To deal with the German threat

[1] The leading units of the German IInd Corps had arrived much earlier in the day and had been heavily engaged at Acy-en-Multien during the morning.

General Maunoury had the 61st Division and the bulk of the 1st Cavalry Corps upon his left flank; the 5th Cavalry Division, which was on a separate mission, being near Troësnes, on the southern edge of the Forest of Villers-Cotterêts.

Advance of the British Army.—The reinforcements hurried off to strengthen the German line upon the Ourcq left only a comparatively small force to withstand the British. Therefore the 7th with the British Army was chiefly a day of cavalry work. The task of holding back the army of Sir John French had been entrusted to General von der Marwitz, and he covered the movements of the German forces in this quarter of the field by a skilful use of the mounted troops at his disposal. His primary object was to hold on to the river crossing at Coulommiers as long as possible, and for this purpose he held the town and a length of the Grand Morin for some miles east and west of it with three divisions of cavalry. Early in the day a portion of the British Third Division was involved in an attempt to seize Coulommiers and the river passage there, an attempt in which it was successful, but at the expense of a considerable number of casualties. Generally speaking, the Germans were here fighting a delaying action, for such infantry as remained in this part of the battlefield were falling back all day covered by the IInd, IXth, and Guard Cavalry Divisions, all three of which suffered severely.

The British cavalry acted everywhere with great vigour, particularly on the right of the line, where the Second Cavalry Brigade was operating beyond Dagny. A charge by a troop and a half of the 9th Lancers effectually dealt with three squadrons of German horse, the fate of the latter being further sealed by dismounted fire action on the part of a squadron of the 18th Hussars. By evening the bulk of the German cavalry had fallen back to the Petit Morin,

south-east of La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, and the British front ran from La Haute Maison on the left, north of Coulommiers in the centre, to Jouy-sur-Morin on the right, with the cavalry north of the Grand Morin but south of Rebais. Symptoms of the hurried nature of the German retreat were apparent all along the routes followed, the roadside and ditches being littered with picture post cards, papers, tins, and rubbish of every description. And every German bivouac and billet was characterized by features which soon became familiar to the pursuing armies, the former by the immense number of empty bottles scattered about, and the latter by the chests of drawers and cupboards flung wide open with their contents strewn all over the floor.

Information as to the prospect of the early arrival of an important reinforcement this day reached the British commander-in-chief, for news came in that the Sixth Division of the Expeditionary Force had broken up its camps at Cambridge and Newmarket and was entraining for Southampton en route to the new British base at St. Nazaire, whence it would be railed up to the front as quickly as possible.

Operations of the French 5th Army.—The French 5th Army, no less than the British, felt the relaxation of pressure on its front caused by the withdrawal of German troops across the Marne, and the task of its left and centre was really one of pursuit, which was carried out in the general direction of Montmirail. The Germans, however, held their ground stoutly in some places, and several villages had to be heavily shelled by the French before it was possible to send the infantry forward with the bayonet to effect their capture. Finally, however, the 18th and 3rd Corps were able to reach the general line La Ferté-Gaucher—Tréfols, which represented a gain of some six

miles of ground. Further to the right the fighting had been considerably more severe, for about noon General Franchet d'Esperey had received word from General Foch that the left of his, 9th, Army was being violently attacked by the enemy and asking for assistance. The 10th Corps was on the right of the 5th Army, and to it General Franchet d'Esperey sent orders to act towards its right so as to afford the assistance required, while the 1st Corps (which was on the left of the 10th) was ordered to conform. The 10th Corps was at first held up by strong enemy forces in the Forest of Gault; but so soon as the 1st Corps worked up the western edge the 10th Corps was enabled to gain ground to the north and it captured almost an entire German battalion in the forest. When darkness fell the main body of the 10th Corps was about Charleville and its right was in touch a couple of miles to the east with the left of the 9th Army, which was still being pressed. The general line of the 5th Army may therefore be said to have been La Ferté-Gaucher—Tréfols—Charleville—Soizy-aux-Bois. It had been a day of considerable success for the 5th Army, for apart from a substantial gain of ground a large number of prisoners and some German transport had been taken.

The French 9th Army heavily attacked.—Probably with the view of easing the strain on the German Ist Army by indirect pressure on another portion of the line, the German higher command had issued orders to the IInd and IIIrd Armies to press the French 9th Army to the utmost of their powers. The latter had in consequence to endure a series of very heavy attacks throughout the day. The significance of these efforts was not, however, lost on General Foch, who shrewdly remarked to a staff officer that the very fury of the German onslaught was tantamount to an admission that things could not be going well with

them elsewhere on their line. His own orders had contemplated the continuance of the offensive of the day before with his left, while maintaining a general defensive along the rest of his line, and briefly summarized they ran as follows :—

The 42nd and Moorish Divisions were to preserve connexion with the 10th Corps of the 5th Army on their left and were to endeavour to renew the offensive from Villeneuve-lez-Charleville towards the north-west.

The 9th Corps was to maintain its hold upon the exits of the southern edge of the Marshes of St. Gond, but was to be ready to advance without delay if called upon.

The 11th Corps was to hold the line on to which it had been forced back the evening before ; but, like the 9th Corps, it was to be ready to advance if required, in which case it would be called upon to move round the eastern edge of the marshes ; a reserve division was to be left about Lenharée to protect the right flank.

The 9th Cavalry Division was to be generally south of the Sommesous—Vitry-le-François railway and was to keep touch with the left of the 4th Army about Humbauville.

Early in the morning the Germans attacked all along the line, and east of the marshes German heavy artillery of the XIIth Corps of the IIIrd Army came into action, to which the French replied with similar pieces. The exact part played in the battle by the 11th Corps is not quite clear. According to one account it acted throughout on the defensive and, though heavily assailed, managed to hold its ground. From another source, however, it would appear that an attempt was made to recover the village of Normée, which the French had lost the day before, that although they now carried it with the bayonet they were

quickly driven out by a German counter-attack, and that the corps generally was so roughly handled that its right was flung back nearly to Salon. The balance of evidence is, however, in favour of the first-quoted version, and it may be taken as a fact that the position of the 11th Corps at evening was very much as it had been in the morning when the fighting opened.[1] In the centre the 9th Corps, protected as it was by the formidable marshes to its front, was able to maintain its line without difficulty, but on the left the 42nd and Moorish Divisions were hard put to it to stave off the weight of the attacks of the German Xth Corps. Thanks, however, in some part to the assistance afforded by the 10th Corps of the 5th Army, no ground was lost. So that, after a day of severe fighting the Germans had made no impression on the French 9th Army other than to deny it the possibility of making progress to the north and west. This, however, was of decided importance to the German side.

Attack on the French 4th Army.—The battle of the Marne has come to be so especially associated in the United Kingdom with the fighting on the Ourcq and the Grand and Petit Morins that the severity of the fighting in the centre and on the eastern sector of the battle front is apt to be overlooked on this side of the Channel. Like the previous day, the 7th September was one of stern combat for the French 4th Army. On the left, round Sompuis, the XIXth Corps of the German IIIrd Army was reinforced by a division of the XIIth Reserve Corps; they made a strenuous effort to drive back the left of the French 17th Corps, a movement which was only checked by the timely arrival of some local reserves. Against the French centre, which

[1] Upon the 8th the 11th Corps was driven back (see p. 189), and it is probable that, by a confusion of dates, such retirement has been, in some sources, accepted as having occurred on the 7th.

was composed of the 12th and Colonial Corps, two corps of the German IVth Army advanced in strength. But the Colonial Corps was able to gain some ground by vigorous counter-strokes, while the 12th Corps, though much reduced in strength, and apparently able to dispose only of six battalions,[1] managed to withstand the efforts of at least 25,000 Germans. On its right the 4th Army was less fortunate. There the XVIIIth Corps and XVIIIth Reserve Corps had been pressing all day, outflanking the French 2nd Corps, By evening Sermaize was in the attackers' hands, with the result that, although the line generally had not been shifted, connexion between the French 4th Army and the 3rd Army on its right was now in danger of being severed.

The French 3rd Army.—Although both the German Crown Prince on the one side and General Sarrail on the other were eager to advance, the 7th witnessed merely more or less desultory encounters between their armies without any decisive result. Each probably felt that the opposition of the other was too strong to allow an advance to be carried out until reinforcements should arrive, and the Crown Prince could not disregard the danger which the mobile garrison of Verdun might prove to his communications. General Sarrail was impatiently awaiting the arrival of the 15th Corps from the 2nd Army at Nancy ; but that corps did not come up until the evening, too late to be utilized in an advance. And the Crown Prince, although he drew upon the VIth Reserve Corps, upon his left to the extent of a brigade, which coming down through the centre of the Forest of Argonne filled a gap between his XIIIth and XVIth Corps, did not feel himself in a position to push further south. The day was

[1] The 12th Corps had suffered severely since the outbreak of war, and many of its battalions were reorganizing in rear.

not one of absolute quiet, for accounts mention *d'âpres combats* as having taken place; but they were not of sufficient weight to effect the general position from Revigny to Verdun.

The Germans threaten the Meuse above Verdun.—But although the day had been one of comparative quiet all along his front, reports had nevertheless kept coming in to General Sarrail which pointed to considerable activity on the part of the enemy on the Heights of the Meuse on the eastern bank of that river. The strategical situation there was unlike that which existed along the rest of the front, for a gap existed in both the French and German lines. In the case of the French the right of their 3rd Army was about Souilly, while the left of the 2nd was in the neighbourhood of Pont-à-Mousson. With the Germans the right of their VIth Army was also about the latter town, while the left of the Vth Army of the Crown Prince, which was formed by the Vth Reserve Corps, could hardly have extended much further south than Etain. In both cases, however, the gap was more apparent than real. It was faced on the east by the great German fortress of Metz; and so far as the French were concerned it was to a great extent bridged by Verdun and its outworks, as well as by a chain of river forts along the Meuse upstream towards Toul. Between Toul and Verdun the Heights of the Meuse slope gradually down to the river and are broken at intervals by a series of deep and precipitous ravines, which are guarded by numerous forts of various dates on either bank.

The German higher command had apparently now realized that to retrieve the doubtful situation near Paris it was imperative to break the French front at Nancy. It was decided that the available troops from Metz, instead of operating from Pont-à-Mousson against the left of the

French position on the Grand Couronné, should be sent to pierce the line of river forts between Verdun and Toul, simultaneously with the attack on Nancy. Of these forts Troyon was selected as the spot where the Verdun—Toul section of the French line was to be assailed in conjunction with the great attack against the Grand Couronné. Troyon was by no means a large fort and was of somewhat old-fashioned design, consisting of a grass-grown perimeter, inside which were deep wide ramparts and ditches with vaults and walls of earth, masonry, and iron, while the armament consisted of 6·1-inch guns in steel cupolas. During the 7th a strong column coming from the direction of Metz was reported by French aviators, and by evening the garrison of Troyon learned that this German force was near Eparges, some seven miles north-east of the fort. Troyon had been almost entirely undisturbed since the outbreak of the war, but by the evening of the 7th the garrison realized that an attack was imminent, an expectation in which they were not disappointed.[1]

Summary of the 7th September.—Considering the operations of the 7th September as a whole—and viewing them from the Allied standpoint—it is impossible to escape a slight sense of disappointment. Not that the six armies of the Allies, which were operating between Verdun and Paris, had in any way failed to respond to the call which General Joffre had made upon them. But the blow which the generalissimo had contemplated on the 4th seemed to have lost some of its sting. General von Kluck had hurried into what was a veritable strategic trap; but so far from being definitely caught within it, or so far

[1] According to some official sources troops from the left wing of the German Vth Army took part in the operations against Fort Troyon. These must have been from the Vth Reserve Corps; but they were almost certainly supplemented by troops from Metz.

from having to turn eastwards in order to escape in time, he was really devoting himself to bringing off a counter-stroke west of the Ourcq. In other words, his efforts leave the impression that he was still hoping to secure a tactical victory rather than merely to hold off the French 6th Army sufficiently long for him to extricate himself from his difficult position. On the other hand it must have been absolutely clear to German General headquarters that his march south-east had been a failure and that a fracture of the Allied line between the British and the French 5th Army was now out of the question. But that the German higher command should be forced to realize its error was by no means all that General Joffre hoped to attain; his object was to make it pay dearly for such mistake, and towards this the 7th September had not witnessed much progress. By the evening of that date his Attack Orders by which he proposed "*profiter de la situation aventurée de la Ire Armée Allemande*" were three days old, and for two whole days his troops had been doing their utmost to carry out such orders. Like a cautious commander, General Joffre had refrained from inserting geographical objectives for his armies as a whole; but in two cases he had given more than a hint as to the line he desired should be reached. The 6th Army was to force the passage of the Ourcq; and it was then to advance "*en direction générale de Château Thierry*"; while the British Army was to attack towards Montmirail. But by the evening of the 7th even the passage of the Ourcq seemed very far off, and until that preliminary step had been taken Château Thierry and Montmirail were but names.

Comments have been uttered upon the apparently small advance made by the British Army during the 6th and 7th September in the face of opposition which had been much reduced in strength, and in German narratives of the battle

the subject has been dealt with in a rather caustic manner.[1] Analysis of what actually occurred upon the 6th and 7th September will, however, show the worthlessness of these criticisms. In the first place it may be pointed out that a distinct modification had taken place in the plan of General Joffre as adumbrated in his orders issued on the evening of the 4th September. In those orders the French 6th Army was to advance toward Château Thierry (i.e. due east),[2] a direction which was also to be followed by the British Army[3] whose objective was to be Montmirail;[4] but as a matter of fact the development of the battle was such that the British Army advanced almost due north, leaving Montmirail wide on its right; and Château Thierry, instead of being occupied by the French 6th Army (on the British *left*), was actually entered by the 18th Corps of the 5th Army (on the British *right*).[5] The exact moment of the battle when such modification was made is not quite clear; but it is certain that by the evening of the 6th the struggle was not going quite as General Joffre had expected. A careful analysis of his orders, and a study of the map and of the operations which ensued, will almost certainly leave the reader with the conviction that the ideas entertained by General Joffre on the 4th and 5th September were not borne out by events.

On the 4th September the main body of the German Ist Army was reported to be moving in a south-

[1] The following examples from German sources are typical:—

"The 7th was a day of hot fighting. . . . If French or his subordinate leaders had only shewn a little spirit of enterprise Kluck's situation would have been very critical."

"Kluck and Bülow had a very easy task with the English. Keeping at a very respectful distance the English Army advanced only to the banks of the Grand Morin, while Kluck's corps were moving back over the Marne. On the evening of the 7th the distance between the English troops and the German cavalry was fully twenty kilometres."

[2] See p. 123. [3] *Ib.* [4] *Ib.* [5] See p. 205.

easterly direction generally east of a line drawn through Nanteuil and Lizy,[1] and throughout that day and the next one—the 5th September—General Joffre was apparently under the impression that such direction was being maintained ; in other words that General von Kluck was heading generally towards Charly-sur-Marne. That such was General Joffre's conviction seems clearly borne out by his orders issued on the evening of the 4th September[2] and particularly by the paragraph dealing with the British Army. The orders to that army were that it should, during the 5th September, " establish itself on the line Changis—Coulommiers facing east." Now, even on the morning of the 5th September, the British line was Courpalay—La Houssaye—Bailly, so that its task for the day—to reach the line Changis—Coulommiers—involved an advance of twelve miles, during which the Grand Morin had to be crossed. The fact that such an order should have been given clearly argues that General Joffre did not anticipate that much opposition would be met with, and leads to the conclusion that he expected the British to find the area Coulommiers—Crécy—Meaux—Changis practically unoccupied by the enemy. He was still labouring under the same misconception on the following day, as is made clear by the following extract from the dispatches of Sir John French.[3] " On Saturday, September 5th, I met the French commander-in-chief at his request, and he informed me of his intention to take the offensive forthwith, as he considered conditions were very favourable to success. General Joffre announced to me his intention of wheeling up the left flank of the 6th Army, pivoting on

[1] See p. 121.

[2] According to one German source General von Kluck had set a trap for General Joffre by leaving only one corps originally on the Ourcq. See p. 254.

[3] The italics are not in the original.

the Marne, and directing it to move on the Ourcq ; cross and attack the flank of the German Ist Army, *which was then moving in a south-easterly direction east of that river.* He requested me to effect a change of front to my right—my left resting on the Marne and my right on the 5th Army—to fill the gap between that army and the 6th. I was then to advance against the enemy in my front and join in the general offensive movement."

As a matter of fact when this interview was taking place the right wing of the German Ist Army was actually astride of the Grand Morin, with its right as far west as Crécy and with the river crossing at Coulommiers well covered.[1] In a word, during the afternoon of the 4th September portion of the German Ist Army must have been moving due south and the right columns must have turned sharp right-handed after crossing the Ourcq and actually headed *south-west.* In the interval which ensued between the interview with General Joffre and the issue of his own orders at 5.30 p.m.[2] the true state of affairs was evidently being revealed to Sir John French. For in those orders there is no mention whatever of taking up a position between Changis and Coulommiers or of pivoting his left upon the Marne, although the south-easterly direction of the enemy's move is still alluded to.

That this unexpected development should have led to delay is obvious, for the revelation of a new situation must necessarily lead to the abandonment of arrangements and the issue of fresh instructions. But the British Army was further kept back by having its advance made contingent on the progress of the French 6th Army on the left. In a semi-official French publication[3] it is stated that the

[1] See footnote 2, p. 145.
[2] See p. 137.
[3] See *L'armée Anglaise sur le continent, Temps,* September, 1915.

advance of the British Army on the 6th September was to commence *quand la 6me armée commencera à déboucher de l'Ourcq*, showing that the passage of the Ourcq was not considered likely to give much trouble.[1] This order would naturally lead to the British Army standing fast until either the announcement came in that the 6th Army was across or until fresh orders, based on the situation that the 6th Army was held up, should be issued.

Another erroneous idea to which General Joffre appears to have clung was the theory that when the pressure by the 6th Army should have made itself felt General von Kluck would be forced to retire in a generally easterly direction. What the French commander-in-chief does not seem to have anticipated was what actually happened, namely, the skilful and lightning-like withdrawal of the bulk of the German Ist Army back over the Marne, the massing of it on the left flank of the French 6th Army, and the conversion of that army from an outflanking force to one which was itself outflanked.[2] It must be admitted that General von Kluck showed consummate tactical ability in endeavouring to retrieve a situation which had become full of peril; and although the exact facts will remain unknown until the various official histories of the war are written—and can be compared—there seem at present good reasons for believing that General von Kluck's vigorous counterstroke at Nanteuil and Betz came as a surprise to the French General Staff. This new development reacted on the British Army as early as the 7th

[1] The words used by General Joffre to Sir John French were that "the French 6th Army would *cross and attack*," etc., clearly showing that the French commander-in-chief expected such opposition, as would be met, as likely to take place *east* of the Ourcq. See *ante*, p. 176. As a matter of fact the Ourcq was not crossed by the 6th Army till the 10th September.

[2] See p. 200.

September, and an authoritative French work in dealing with the operations of the British on that day states that orders were issued for the British Army to continue its march, but to *wheel up its right towards Rebais*, or in other words to abandon the eastern advance in favour of one more to the north.[1]

To abandon an easterly march in favour of a wheel to the north is a comparatively simple matter when small forces such as battalions or brigades are concerned, but with several army corps the problem becomes more awkward. Considerable staff work is required, elaborate arrangements have to be cancelled, and fresh instructions must be circulated. All this necessarily involved some delay, especially for the right wing. Erroneous conclusions on the part of the French General Staff, with the counter-orders which they caused, necessarily militated against a rapid advance by the British Army. Nevertheless, in spite of serious handicaps it managed to keep its place in line. Owing to its position at the hinge, so to speak, of an enveloping movement, its first duty was to form a connexion between the right flank of the French 6th Army and the left flank of the 5th, and above all things to avoid pushing so far forward as to leave the connexion broken. But the right flank of the 6th Army was on the evening of the 7th September only about Meaux, while the left of the 5th Army was at La Ferté-Gaucher, and a reference to the map and to the position of the British Army on the evening of the 7th, as given in this chapter, will show how admirably the line was kept. In addition it may be remarked that the British right on this day gained eight to ten miles of ground—no

[1] "Les indications du commandement pour le journée du 7 Septembre portent que l'armée britannique doit continuer sa marche en opérant une conversion, le droite en avant, par échelons, vers Rebais."—Gustave Babin, *La Bataille de la Marne.*

mean advance in the face of an enemy fighting an obstinate delaying action with mobile troops and numerous machine guns.

A somewhat disquieting feature of the day was the apparent intention of the Germans to make another effort to turn the Paris—Verdun line at Nancy and at Troyon. Whether the fact that the German Emperor had betaken himself to that quarter of the field was or was not known to General Joffre at this time is not certain, but it is probable that his secret service had acquainted him with the intelligence. If so, the news must have caused him some disquiet. It seemed to indicate particular activity in that quarter. A successful thrust against the upper Meuse on the part of the Germans would have very seriously discounted the French thrust on the Ourcq, which, as already pointed out, had by now lost some of its effect. It was impossible, too, to gauge what strength the Germans might put into this blow in the east. Metz was but a few miles from the threatened point, and within that immense fortress very large forces might have been accumulating from all parts of Germany which could be flung against the Meuse before any warning could reach the French. The concealment afforded by a large and uninvested fortress is apt to have disconcerting effects upon an enemy in the vicinity. Paris had surprised the Germans by emitting a strong field army at the critical moment. Metz might quite possibly confound General Joffre's strategy in a similar way.

Nor was this all. The German armies had until now been seriously inconvenienced by the stand made by Maubeuge, which deprived them of the use of an urgently required line of railway. The importance of the retention of the place was fully realized by the French Government, and on the 7th the War Minister addressed a panegyric to the

commandant of the fortress, eulogizing the bravery of the garrison and expressing the conviction of the Government that it would prolong resistance "*jusqu'à l'heure, que j'espère prochaine, de votre délivrance.*" Unfortunately this stirring appeal proved to be the funeral oration of Maubeuge. It capitulated on the same day, and 40,000 prisoners, 400 guns, and a great quantity of war material fell into German hands.[1] The moral effect on the French of the loss of one more fortress could be ignored in view of the more favourable turn events had taken within the past few days. But the tangible benefit conferred upon the invaders by the acquisition of another line of railway and by the setting free of an army corps could not be disregarded at French General Head-quarters.

[1] The 40,000 prisoners almost certainly included civilians, the Germans generally including such in their number of captured.

CHAPTER XII

THE BATTLE OF THE MARNE (*continued*)
OPERATIONS OF THE 8TH SEPTEMBER

Maps 7, 2, 5.

The struggle on the Ourcq.—Although the Germans were by now feeling the pressure which was to culminate in their general retirement, no sign of retreat manifested itself along the Ourcq on the 8th September. This day was indeed made remarkable by the violence of the German attacks. The situation as it existed in the morning was that the French 6th Army occupied approximately the line Betz—Etavigny—Pusieux—Marcilly—Chambry and to the south of the last-named village, with the 61st Reserve Division and the 1st Cavalry Corps on the refused left flank, the 7th Corps from about Etavigny to Marcilly, the 45th Division thence to Barcy, and the 56th and 55th Reserve Divisions and the Moorish Brigade on the extreme right. Opposed to the 6th Army were now four corps of the German Ist Army, so that it will be realized that the commander of the French 6th Army had his work cut out to achieve a tactical victory.[1]

[1] The German Corps were the IInd, IVth, IVth Reserve, and IXth Corps. The latter was on the German right; the other three carried on the line and were, apparently, rather intermingled. Some confusion exists as to the number and numeration of the German Corps engaged in the battle of the Ourcq. It is universally agreed that the IVth Reserve Corps was dropped by General von Kluck as his flank guard during his march across the Ourcq; but unanimity does not exist as to the corps sent to reinforce it. Some writers mention three corps in all, and omit the IXth Corps. The authorities for the inclusion of the

His plan for the 8th September was to attack with the 45th Division from the line Barcy—Marcilly towards Etrépilly and Vareddes, while at the same time endeavouring to outflank the enemy on his left flank with the 61st Reserve Division. The 7th Corps was ordered to hold the line, between these two operations, at all cost. It had to endure very severe pressure from the Germans, and the fighting between Etavigny and Marcilly was almost as obstinate as any on record. Its left flank was heavily attacked at Etavigny and le Bas-Bouillancy, and the Germans occupied Thury-en-Valois and Betz. The attack developed about one o'clock in the afternoon, and was apparently carried out by a portion of the German IVth Corps, while some hours later a German cavalry division was located about Thury-en-Valois. At Acy-en-Multien the struggle went on all day with extreme violence, and by evening the Germans were still holding the village itself, while the French were in occupation of a little triangular wood which commanded the entrance to the village and was full of the corpses of hundreds of both sides. Between Pusieux and Etrépilly stands a farm, isolated and quadrangular like La Haye Sainte, which from its position at the summit of a small hill commands two roads and was thus of considerable tactical importance. Fierce fighting raged about it; on one occasion a French company was sent to storm the building but only

four corps given above are, firstly, Gustave Babin's extremely precise narrative of the battle; and, secondly, the German semi-official *Die Schlacht n an der Marne* from which the following extracts are given: "Sofort liess Kluck das IV und Teile des II Korps auf das Nordufer der Marne hinübergehen um sein IV Reserve Korps zu unterstützen" (p. 26); and, "Da es den Engländern unmöglich war die Deutschen zum Kampfe zu veranlassen, konnte Kluck immer mehr Truppen—den Rest II Korps und des IX Korps—auf das Nordufer der Marne hinüberschaffen lassen" (p. 27). It should be noted that this German account appeared months later than M. Babin's narrative, so that the latter's testimony is clearly from an independent source.

seven returned, and when two more companies were told off for a renewed attack only ten answered to the roll call when this place was finally taken.[1] "The German trenches near Etrépilly were so many charnel houses, and flocks of crows hovering over the woods revealed where other corpses lay." In such words an eye-witness testifies to the severity of the fighting in this quarter of the field. Four days after the end of the battle of the Marne the streets of Etrépilly and Trocy were still blocked with the dead bodies of the slain.[2]

While his 7th Corps was being thus assailed General Maunoury was endeavouring to outflank the enemy to the north, and with his 45th Division was trying to detain as many of the enemy as possible towards Meaux so as to lessen the opposition which the Germans might make to his own outflanking movement at the other end of his line. For the latter operation he had the 61st Reserve Division and the 1st Cavalry Corps. During the morning the 7th Division of the 4th Corps was also placed at his disposal.[3] This division he at first kept

[1] The French were apparently east of the farm by the evening of the 7th. The fighting on the 8th about the farm must, therefore, have been the sequel to a successful German counterstroke.

[2] The words are those of the Bishop of Meaux and are quoted in *The Battle of the Ourcq* by F. Ashford White.

[3] The exact movements of the French 4th Corps during these days were as follows. It was taken out of the 3rd Army by General Joffre about the 3rd September and sent "*vers Paris*," detraining at Gagny (see p. 146). One division, the 8th, was, on the 6th, south of Meaux, where it was in touch with the British Third Corps (see p. 148), and the other division, the 7th, remained at Gagny. Up till the 8th September the 4th Corps remained, apparently, at the disposal of General Joffre; but on that day the French commander-in-chief ordered the 7th Division from Gagny and put it and the 8th Division (i.e. the whole 4th Corps) at the disposal of the commander of the 6th Army. It is maintained in some quarters that the movement of the 7th Division was entirely due to the initiative of General Gallieni, the Military Governor of Paris. It is certain that he requisitioned over 1000 motor vehicles in Paris and sent them to Gagny for this purpose. According to French accounts just at

as his army reserve. Details of the offensive movement thus projected by General Maunoury are lacking, but it is clear that it failed, as is indeed proved by the fact that by evening the Germans were in Betz. All that the French commander could do was to push the left flank of the 61st Reserve Division further to the south-west so that it rested about a mile north of Villers-St. Genest, and to put in the 7th Division between it and the left of the hardly pressed 7th Corps about Etavigny. The 1st Cavalry Corps apparently rendered but little assistance during the day.[1]

As regards the offensive by the 45th Division—African troops, whose favourite weapon was the bayonet—this, like the movement on the left flank, had started early in the morning and had been characterized by equally stiff fighting. Faithful to their traditions of heroism, the Zouaves had distinguished themselves round Chambry on the 6th and 7th, but even those efforts were surpassed on the 8th September. The Germans had firmly ensconced themselves in the cemetery, which they had transformed into a veritable fortress, for the walls had been pierced with loop-holes and a series of trenches ran round the village, abundantly supplied with machine-guns. Supported by the fire of the French 75's posted near Barcy, and at the foot of the slopes by Monthyon and Penchard, the Zouaves brilliantly stormed the enemy's position. But the fire of some German heavy guns in action about Vareddes soon rendered the cemetery untenable, and compelled the victors to take cover in the roadside ditches

that time a request for assistance was received by General Maunoury from the British commander-in-chief, and accordingly the 8th Division, which was still between the French 6th Army and the British Army, was lent to the latter. There is no mention of this transaction in the official dispatches of Sir John French.

[1] "Le corps de cavalerie du général Sordet ne donne pas ce qu'on en attendait."—Pierre Dauzet, *De Liége à la Marne.*

outside the place, where they managed to hold on. It is doubtful whether the attack by the 45th Division diverted any German troops to this sector of the field at the expense of their outflanking movement towards Betz. The Germans were now very strong west of the Ourcq, and the defenders of the sector of front attacked by the 45th Division had been quite able to hold their own, and indeed seem to have gained ground near Etrépilly and to have formed a dent in the French line. Fighting extended as far south as Neufmontiers and Chauconin, where the troops of the 55th and 56th Reserve Divisions seem for the moment to have been in difficulties, and Meaux appears to have been entered by some French and British troops during the evening, but exact details of these incidents are lacking.[1] On the left bank of the Marne the 8th Division of the 4th Corps had during the day been ordered to Trilport and Changis to deal with German columns which were reported as passing the Marne at those points, but it was later directed to remain south of the river in the circumstances already related.[2]

The British Army forces the passage of the Petit Morin.—The general order for the British Army was now to advance towards Nogent-l'Artaud as a preliminary step to a further movement towards Château Thierry, that sector of the Petit Morin between La Ferté-sous-Jouarre and Sablonnières being the portion of the river line which was to be crossed. When the troops left their bivouacs early in the morning the sky was already full of aeroplanes and the air humming with the whir of their engines. As the German cavalry which had been opposing the British throughout the 7th had, on the morning of that day, fallen back to

[1] So far as the British troops are concerned they were almost certainly cyclist scouts and divisional cyclists.

[2] See footnote 3, p. 183.

the right bank of the Petit Morin, the march of the British was at first undisturbed. But on reaching that river it was soon realized that the German rearguard would not yield their line without a struggle, especially as the steep valley, covered with small but thick woods, distinctly favoured the defence. On the British right two battalions of the First Corps were sharply engaged about Sablonnières and suffered a number of casualties before they succeeded in clearing the Germans out of the village in conjunction with the First Cavalry Brigade. A couple of miles to the west the left of the same corps met with considerable opposition, the Second Division being held up for some time at La Trétoire; but two Guards battalions of the division and some cavalry managed to get across the river higher up and turned the flank of the German rearguard which was dislodged with considerable loss. "On the far side of the stream was an awful mess: our guns had apparently got the range of the road perfectly and given them the devil of a time."[1] Several machine-guns and many prisoners were captured, and upwards of two hundred dead were left on the ground. Later in the day a counter-attack by the Germans was repulsed by the British First Corps, a further quantity of prisoners and some guns being captured. Lower down the river the Second Corps was engaged between Orly and Jouarre, the Eighth Brigade experiencing some trouble near the former village; but after a horse artillery battery had bombarded the position for some time two infantry battalions rushed it, driving off the Germans and capturing several machine-guns. On the left the Third Corps had passed through La Haute Maison early in the morning and during the day attacked from the line Signy-Signets—Jouarre in the direction of La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, supported by some

[1] *Diary of a Subaltern. The Advance.*

French guns, while the British howitzers shelled the bridges of that place across which Germans were streaming northward. The attack succeeded except for the fact that the Germans destroyed the bridges at La Ferté-sous-Jouarre and, by holding the town on the further bank, prevented the British from crossing. By evening the British had made good the Petit Morin and were on the line west and south of La Ferté-sous-Jouarre—Rougeville —La Noue—Viels Maisons.

The French 5th Army reaches Montmirail.—The orders of General Franchet d'Esperey for the 8th September aimed at securing the line of the Petit Morin east and west of Montmirail and at carrying out an advance of some miles on the further side, while supporting the 9th Army on his right and maintaining touch by means of the 2nd Cavalry Corps with the British Army on his left. For this he issued orders to the following effect :—

The 2nd Cavalry Corps was to preserve connexion with the British Army during the advance by it and the French 5th Army.

The 18th Corps, keeping west of Montmirail, was to advance to Fontenelle.

The 3rd Corps was to take Montmirail and was then to continue its advance to Corrobert.

The 1st Corps was to advance to Orbais.

The 10th Corps was to assist the 42nd and Moorish Divisions of the 9th Army and was to endeavour with them to gain ground towards the north.

Like the British Army, the French 5th Army does not appear to have experienced any very considerable difficulty until the Petit Morin was in sight, but, that river once reached, the Germans showed that they were not prepared to abandon it without a struggle. On the left General

Maud'huy's 18th Corps forced the passage of the river near La Celle, and pushing on towards his objective at Fontenelle gained some ground on the right. But the opposition was too severe to enable him to arrive further than a line east and west, roughly, of Marchais-en-Brie. The French 3rd Corps had a difficult task at Montmirail, for the heights on the right bank were thick with German troops, and the Germans brought many guns into action, so that the fighting lasted for more than eight hours. Finally, however, the defenders fell back having lost some 7000 killed and wounded as well as numerous prisoners, and the town was at once occupied by the French. On the right of this French gain the 1st Corps had succeeded in reaching Vauchamps, which was, however, destroyed by a conflagration that broke out. As for the 10th Corps on the extreme right of the 5th Army it managed to reach, and apparently to cross, the Petit Morin north of Charleville; it then faced east to carry out its task of co-operating with the left of General Foch's 9th Army. The actual objectives assigned by the commander had not been reached by the 5th Army, but these were probably to indicate the general direction which the corps were to take rather than the line which it was actually expected they would attain. The capture of Montmirail and the river line east and west of it represented a good day's work.

The French 9th Army in difficulties.—The action of the French 6th Army on the Ourcq by attracting to that quarter of the field the bulk of the German Ist Army, had enabled the British and French 5th Armies to plunge straight ahead, and in this way to gain a good deal of ground towards the north. The Germans were not long in realizing the danger that menaced them. Even before the 8th September they had made frantic efforts to break through the centre of the Allied line between Sézanne and Fère-Champenoise in the

region of the marshes of St. Gond. The Guard Corps and other picked troops were massed at that point with the object of overthrowing General Foch's army, and on the 8th further attempts were made by the Germans to pierce the Allied line and to cut the armies opposing them in two by a series of repeated onslaughts conducted with the most reckless violence.

On the left of the 9th Army the 42nd and Moorish Divisions were clinging desperately to the outskirts of the plateau overlooking the marshes of St. Gond, and during the 8th September the German attack, which had continued all through the previous day, was carried out with increased bitterness by the Xth, and the right wing of the Guard Corps. The Moorish Division, under General Humbert, however, held fast to every inch of ground, replying to each German thrust by a still more furious assault and not for a single instant would General Foch admit the possibility of retreat. It is related how, when at a critical moment a subordinate commander reported that his troops were so worn out as to be incapable of further effort, General Foch replied merely with a curt order to attack at once. This spirit of refusing to acknowledge defeat doubtless reacted on the hardly pressed left flank, with the result that the 42nd Division—aided by the 10th Corps of the 5th Army—was enabled to gain ground to the north and to reoccupy Talus. Further to the right the 9th Corps still held the line of the southern edge of the St. Gond marshes, but, beyond that, a somewhat serious situation for the French developed during the day. Attacked by the left wing of the Guard Corps of the German IInd Army, and by two corps of the IIIrd Saxon Army, the French 11th Corps was driven back as far as the line Connantre—Corroy—Gourgançon, a circumstance which involved the transfer of General Foch's headquarters from Pleurs right

back to Plancy on the Aube. Behind the stream La Maurienne, which runs across the greater portion of the front it had now taken up, the 11th Corps reformed, and, aided by a counter-attack made by one of the Reserve Divisions with the 9th Army, it was enabled to advance and regain some high ground north of Oeuvy. The situation had, however, been distinctly disquieting, and to a chief possessed of less imperturbability than General Foch it might have seemed the prelude of a disaster. On the extreme right the 9th Cavalry Division about Mailly had maintained its close connexion with the 4th Army and had supported an attack made by the latter in the neighbourhood of Sompuis.

The French 4th Army.—Fierce though the fighting had been on either side of the marshes of St. Gond, it is a question whether the 4th French Army had not to withstand attacks equally savage in nature. In that army the 2nd Corps was heavily attacked by two corps of the Duke of Würtemberg's IVth Army. One of them, pushing forward from the line Sermaize—Contrisson, endeavoured to wheel to its right and thus roll up the right flank of the 4th Army, while the other held the 2nd Corps in front. So severe was the pressure, especially on the French right, that General Langle de Cary was compelled to call upon the 3rd Army for assistance. Fortunately the arrival of the 15th Corps on the previous evening enabled General Sarrail to comply with this request, although in view of his own situation the force which he was able to spare was comparatively small. Nevertheless one brigade of the 15th Corps, crossing the Marne and heading south of Contrisson, produced some effect, menacing as it did the left flank of the German corps, and it was assisted by the attacks which General Sarrail delivered with his left. A little later, fighting developed on the other flank of the 4th Army. There,

it will be remembered, the situation of the French was not very favourable owing to the gap, filled only by a cavalry division, which existed between the left of the 4th and the right of the 9th Army. Curiously enough, however, the Germans seem also to have been rather short of troops on this sector of the battlefield, and though an attempt was made to penetrate the gap this was carried out, apparently, by only a division of General von Hausen's Saxons, against whom the French 9th Cavalry Division, with its superior mobility, was able to effect a substantial resistance.

By the afternoon the battle was raging fiercely all along the front, the French 4th Army being to a certain extent overlapped on either flank by the combined strength of about half of the German IIIrd and the whole of the Duke of Würtemberg's IVth Army. The diary of an officer of the 178th Regiment of the former army reveals the severity of the struggle : " We went forward to the attack against an enemy perfectly entrenched. In spite of the artillery fire which nothing could silence we went through the wood again. As soon as we reached the northern edge a perfectly maddening fire opened on us—infantry and shell fire with redoubled intensity. We got to the village at last, but were driven out of it again with heavy loss. Our losses were enormous. The 178th Regiment alone had 1700 men wounded, besides those killed. It was hell itself. There were practically no officers left." In fighting such as this ground was lost and recovered and lost again. But, on the whole, the French held their own and the Germans scored no real success except upon the French left where the 17th Corps had to yield some terrain. Here, however, reinforcements were expected by the French, for the commander-in-chief had promised General Langle de Cary the 21st Corps, which had hitherto formed part of the French 1st Army in Alsace. That corps had detrained

about Vassy, and had marched to Chavanges. Thence it was sent north-west into the gap in the French line, and by the evening of the 8th its 18th Division was concentrated a few miles south of Sompuis, while the 43rd Division lay a few miles still further south at Dampierre.

The French 3rd Army.—Although General Sarrail was now stronger by one corps—the 15th—than he had been throughout the previous day, this access to his fighting strength was to some extent neutralized by the situation of the 4th Army on his left, for the 15th Corps which was put in towards Contrisson had to be satisfied with regaining and consolidating ground yielded up by the 2nd Corps. This, to a certain extent, tied General Sarrail's hands and precluded him from adopting a general offensive. Nevertheless, on his original left his 5th Corps gained some ground in front of Laimont; but elsewhere he was confined to the defensive. In the centre his 6th Corps withstood a German attack from the direction of Triaucourt, and further to the right the Reserve Divisions on the line Nubécourt —St. André also held their own. The guns of the 6th Corps did excellent work during the day, and several batteries of the German XVIth Corps were put out of action. The efforts by the Germans were not remarkable for any particular vigour, and indeed before dusk fighting almost entirely died away, leaving the French 3rd Army practically on the same positions as it had held at dawn. This negative success, however, fell far short of the task assigned by General Joffre in his order of the 5th, by which the 3rd Army was to issue north of Revigny and take the offensive towards the west, and it was still further discounted by the news which General Sarrail kept receiving of what was going on behind him. The activity of the enemy on the Heights of the Meuse had become so pronounced as to lead General Sarrail

to send orders to destroy the bridges over the Meuse, and later he felt constrained to send off his 7th Cavalry Division to reinforce the river line from Verdun to St. Mihiel in conjunction with the 2nd Cavalry Division and other troops from Toul which would carry on the duty higher up. All the information received pointed to the fact that the Germans were launching an attack upon the river forts, and during the day this expectation was verified by news of the bombardment of Fort Troyon.

The German attack on Fort Troyon.—Early in the morning the prognostications of the garrison of Fort Troyon as to the probability of a bombardment were confirmed, for shortly after eight o'clock German siege artillery opened fire, and with such effect that before noon some half-dozen of the French guns had been put out of action. To this fire the garrison were unable to reply with any effect, for the German pieces were cleverly hid in the deep ravines on the right bank, and until aeroplanes from Verdun could locate them they were immune from any but chance hits from the fort. During the morning the commandant of Verdun sent a telephone message to the effect that the success of the battle west of Verdun depended on Fort Troyon holding out for forty-eight hours, an appeal which steeled the garrison to resist to the last man. During the afternoon, when more than four hundred shells had fallen on the fort, the bombardment died away somewhat, but later there was a further and severe outburst for some three hours. Nevertheless the casualties among the garrison throughout the day were exceedingly small. This did not, however, compensate for the damage done to cupolas and guns which made it clear that the downfall of the fort, if left to its own resources, must only be a matter of a short time. By the evening of the 8th it was a question whether the Germans would not succeed in so battering

the fort as to justify their launching their infantry to seize it within the time for which the commandant of Verdun had appealed to the garrison to hold out.

Violent German attack on the Grand Couronné de Nancy.—While the bombardment of Fort Troyon was in progress, thirty miles to the south-east the Germans were engaged in a supreme effort to make themselves masters of the Grand Couronné. They held the village of Champenoux and the forest of the same name at its foot. From there an attack was delivered against the plateau of Amance, which, as has been said, had now come to be regarded as the key of the position. Fierce fighting had been going on since the 6th, but it was upon the 8th that it culminated in an extra effort by the Bavarian troops of the German VIth Army—troops whose reputation was second to none in the Fatherland and who were heirs to the traditions of the desperate attack on Bazeilles on the day of Sedan. The Emperor had come to lend the troops the inspiration of his presence, and by him was issued the famous order that Nancy was to be taken at all costs and under his own eye. It is said that when the usual preliminary bombardment had ceased he issued personally the order for the final assault. With bands playing and colours flying the assaulting columns debouched from the woods below to attack the French positions on the side of the hill. The defenders reserved their fire with admirable self-restraint, even the artillery, apparently, being silent during the German advance; but when the assailants had reached point-blank range they were mown down by a storm of musketry and their discomfiture was completed by a furious bayonet charge on the part of the French. The Bavarians recoiled before this onslaught and then broke in wild confusion, followed by the fire of the French 75's, which wrought terrible execution. In the shelter of

the woods they were rallied and sent forward once again, but with no more success. Six times in all they advanced with indomitable bravery, only to be driven back each time to the foot of the hill, where, however, they gained little real protection. "At some places the bodies were piled up five or six feet high, and when the survivors took cover behind the heaps of dead and wounded the 75's still raked them through and through, smothering dead and living in a horrible mire of flesh and blood, while the 155's, firing over the heads of the front ranks, finished off the work further back."[1] The attack, in a word, was a total failure. What the attempt cost the Germans will probably never be known, but it is certain that the losses were enormous, and instead of participating in a triumphal entry into Nancy what the Emperor had seen was some of his finest troops blotted out of existence.

Summary of the 8th September.—Compared with the situation existing the previous evening, the general outlook of the Allies had considerably improved by nightfall on the 8th. It is true that the French 6th Army was still held in check by General von Kluck. Indeed its position had if anything changed for the worse during the day. But this failure was entirely outweighed by the striking French success at Nancy. There the Germans had put forth the greatest effort they had so far made, without producing the slightest effect upon the French, and with the result that enormous losses had been suffered by the attackers. This is not to assert that the grave danger of a German penetration at Nancy had been wholly removed, for heavy losses did not then, nor later, deter the German command from following up to the bitter end any tactical task which it assigned to the German armies. But their defeat, at any rate, compelled the attackers to

[1] Gerald Campbell, *Verdun to the Vosges.*

pause, and this gave General Joffre the opportunity to proceed undisturbed with his strategic blow upon the Ourcq.

Although it is true to say that the French 6th Army was still held in check, the German situation in the west was becoming precarious. General von Kluck could not indefinitely continue robbing Peter to pay Paul. His army was not an inexhaustible reservoir of troops, and by the evening of the 8th he had withdrawn practically the whole of his infantry from the Grand Morin to the Ourcq, for by that time it is believed that the IIIrd Corps was also *en route* for the latter river. It was by now abundantly clear that his cavalry divisions, even with their numerous machine-guns, could not delay the British Army and the left of the French 5th Army much longer. Already the German horsemen had lost the two Morins, and the danger of finding the British Army pouring behind his left flank must by now have been extremely disquieting to the commander of the German Ist Army. There was still the chance that by a decisive victory over the French 6th Army he might to some extent retrieve the situation. But the sands were running out. The British and the French 5th Army were animated by the spirit summarized in the phrase "getting their own back," and unless he secured victory soon he was a beaten general. In a word, the crisis of the battle, if not of the whole war, promised to develop on the morrow.

A point worth referring to here is the admirable system of mutual support which obtained in the Allied Armies and was more especially noticeable upon the 8th September. The Military Governor of Paris had already sent the 61st Reserve Division to the 6th Army, and on the evening of the 8th he was preparing still further to strengthen General Maunoury at his own expense, by sending reinforcements

north-east by rail and motor.[1] General Maunoury, too, when the 4th Corps was put under him, left the 8th Division south of the Marne to assist the British, although the need for further troops upon his own left was urgent. The commander of the French 5th Army saw to it that his 2nd Cavalry Corps was in a position to assist the British right if required, and directed his 10th Corps on the other flank to assist the left of General Foch's 9th Army. Of that army the 9th Cavalry Division on the right supported an attack made by the left of the 4th Army at Sompuis, and that army was again assisted on its right by the 15th Corps of General Sarrail's 3rd Army. Further, when news came in of the situation on the Meuse, General Sarrail sent off the whole of his cavalry division to afford what help it could, and the commandant of Toul was equally prompt in sending the 2nd Cavalry Division and a mixed brigade. By this system of mutual co-operation the French generals were able to stave off the fiercest German attacks, and no contrast could be more remarkable than one between their action in this respect in 1914 and that of their predecessors in similar circumstances in 1870.

A curious feature of the day's fighting was the lack of vigour with which the attacks of the Crown Prince's army were pushed. Seeing that the 8th saw the furious attempt against the Grand Couronné de Nancy and the bombardment of Fort Troyon, which was obviously the prelude to an infantry assault, it would have been thought that by fierce attacks the Crown Prince would have endeavoured to intensify the dangerous position in which General Sarrail stood, and to deprive him of the possibility of sending reinforcements to the Meuse. As it was, the Crown Prince's army seemed almost to have enjoyed a day of leisure in comparison with the efforts of their comrades

[1] See p. 199.

further west. It has been stated that the ammunition supply ran low during the afternoon, and it has been surmised that some of the Crown Prince's troops had been transferred to the right bank of the Meuse, where the Vth Reserve Corps was to assist in the new movement against the river forts. The most plausible explanation, however, is that he had grown exceedingly uneasy as to the possibility of Verdun emitting a surprise force on his left flank. Whatever may have been the reason, the German Vth Army had an easy day.

CHAPTER XIII

THE BATTLE OF THE MARNE (*continued*)
OPERATIONS OF THE 9TH SEPTEMBER

Maps 7, 2, 5.

The crisis on the Ourcq.—Wednesday the 9th September was a day of high winds and drenching rains, which were especially violent in the centre and east of the position. A critical moment had arrived, for on the Ourcq the battle was still undecided, and the menace to General Maunoury's left flank had grown extremely serious. By the evening of the 8th it had become clear that his task of beating back the Germans, not to mention his original mission of forcing the passage over the Ourcq, was quite beyond his power unless reinforcements could be sent to him. In the absence of a General Reserve, reinforcements, however, were difficult to obtain, but the Military Governor of Paris again rose to the occasion. During the night he dispatched some Zouave troops by railway and by motors to Senlis and Creil, and, apparently at the same time and by the latter method of transport, he sent the 62nd Reserve Division from the Paris garrison.[1] The Germans on their side were making most determined efforts to drive in the French left flank. During the morning they gained possession of Nanteuil and their troops were found as far as Baron to the north-west. The French cavalry soon made some

[1] The 62nd Reserve Division consisted of Zouave troops, and the reinforcements sent to Senlis and Creil probably came from it.

prisoners, from whom it was discovered that the new arrivals consisted of at least a brigade of landwehr troops.[1]

The French 4th Corps (less the 8th Division) was now upon the extreme left. In face of the severe attack upon his front, and fearing that the enemy at Baron might work round his rear, its commander withdrew towards Silly-le-Long. The exact circumstances of this retrograde movement are not quite clear, but it is certain that the 4th Corps was for the moment definitely in retreat. General Maunoury when he heard what was happening instantly sent a staff officer to General Boëlle, the commander of the corps, with instructions to hold his ground at all cost, and even to advance, regardless of sacrifices.[2] In response to this urgent message General Boelle halted his men and, flanked by some of the 1st Cavalry Corps, struggled northwards towards Nanteuil.

General von Kluck had, however, now shot his bolt. News had apparently reached him about midday from General von Marwitz, who was commanding the rear-guard on the Marne, indicating the difficulties that he was experiencing in face of the strong British advance. This intelligence, coupled later with the news that the

[1] According to some sources these troops were reinforcement coming from Compiègne, and formed part of the VIIth Reserve Corps set free by the fall of Maubeuge.

[2] In common with several other of the more dramatic incidents of the battle there is some uncertainty as to the exact time when this incident took place. In Gustave Babin's excellent *Bataille de la Marne* the staff officer concerned—*qui frémissait en nous contant cette phase de la bataille*—is reported as stating that the message was delivered to General Boëlle during the night of the 8th-9th September. In a well-known Parisian newspaper, however, there appeared an article, apparently from the pen of the same officer, which leaves the reader under the impression that the order reached General Boëlle shortly after 5.30 p.m. It is certain that at this hour the situation on the French left was very critical, and it is probable that the order in question reached General Boëlle shortly afterwards

French 4th Corps was coming on again at Nanteuil, seems to have brought it home to him that there was now nothing for it but a frank retreat. The definite orders to that effect were issued somewhere about 8 p.m., but these were anticipated by instructions for the immediate withdrawal of troops not actually engaged. During the afternoon French aeroplanes were therefore able to report that immense German trains east of the Ourcq were heading north-east evidently in full retreat, and that these were being followed by columns of all arms. It was clear that General von Kluck was withdrawing from the line of the Ourcq, and although he still clung obstinately to Nanteuil, Etavigny, and Betz, this was with the object of threatening the French left and rear should the centre and right of the 6th Army attempt to cross the Ourcq in pursuit. Realizing that the Germans must now be dislodged from those places without delay, General Maunoury summoned the 8th Division to leave the right flank and to hurry to Silly-le-Long so as to be in position to support an attack which he proposed to deliver with his left early on the 10th.[1] This he hoped would put the seal on the victory which his army had now unquestionably achieved.

This happy consummation for the French was not, however, entirely due to the counterstroke of the 7th Division of the 4th Corps, for elsewhere along the line of the 6th Army the remaining troops had played a gallant part. About Etavigny the Germans held out against the efforts of the French to dislodge them. But near Acy-en-Multien the French repelled a determined effort by the enemy, and in the centre they delivered a very violent attack from Pusieux against the Trocy plateau, in which they were effectively assisted by their 75's. The Germans here kept up a sustained fire from their heavy guns, but the

[1] The infantry were brought round by rail.

French were not to be denied, and foot by foot they drove the enemy from his entrenched positions. In this they were considerably assisted by the enfilade fire of one of their batteries which had managed to get forward towards Etrépilly, where it came into action; it caused very severe casualties to the Germans, who frantically endeavoured to dig a new line of trenches perpendicular to their front, facing Pusieux. Further south fighting no less bitter went on throughout the day, and the high ground north-west of Vareddes where the Germans were strongly entrenched was almost smothered by the fire of the French field guns before troops from the 45th Division took it by assault. All the German heavy artillery, which had rendered signal service in holding the French 6th Army off from the Ourcq, was safely carried away, although some of it was kept in position up to at least midday. When night fell the German resistance had appreciably weakened, and all ranks of the French 6th Army eagerly awaited the orders to pursue, which it was realized were certain to be issued before morning.

The British Army crosses the Marne.—Although the transfer of almost the whole of General von Kluck's army to the Ourcq had the effect of rendering the British advance a very much simpler operation than it would otherwise have been, the Third Corps on the left encountered considerable opposition. The Germans had destroyed the bridges at La Ferté-sous-Jouarre. In face of a strong rear-guard, plentifully equipped with machine-guns, the British engineers were unable to bridge the river during daylight. The bulk of the Third Corps did not therefore get across till after nightfall, although a party which had been pushed across near Changis had established itself on the north bank during the afternoon. The Second Corps forced the passage higher up the river, apparently without great diffi-

culty, much of the fighting consisting in rounding up small parties of the enemy who had been left on the south bank, apparently with orders to delay the advance until they were either killed or captured. Once across, a battalion of the Lincolnshire Regiment attacked and captured a German battery, of which the gunners behaved with great gallantry, sticking to their guns until every man of the battery had been killed or wounded.

The First Corps crossed between Charly-sur-Marne and Château Thierry, encountering damaging opposition on the part of the enemy's machine-guns, although at one point—Charly-sur-Marne—no resistance at all was experienced. "Down in the bottom of the valley lay the town of Charly, approached by a bridge. This was our objective. On one side the slopes were thickly wooded, and we hid in these woods about half-way down and awaited events. It was a perfect morning, and there was not a sign of any living person. Everything seemed to be at peace, and it was very hard to realize that we were at war. Looking across the valley with glasses one could see that there was a barricade on the bridge, and that the houses on each side were heavily loopholed. Straight behind the town rose a natural amphitheatre, where there might have been several tiers of trenches all covering the bridge. In fact it looked as though we were going to have a job to get across. Then in the fields below appeared a string of dots, slowly advancing towards the bridge. They were a platoon sent forward to find out what there was in front of us. Every moment we expected to hear the stillness of the morning broken by the crackle of machine-guns and rifle fire. They reached the bank and lay down: nothing happened. Then a figure got up and started across the bridge: surely it was mined. No: one by one they followed their leader and

started to throw the carts which formed the barricade into the river. And so we crossed absolutely unopposed ; we learnt from the inhabitants that the enemy had got everything ready for defending the bridge and had then got hopelessly drunk."[1]

The right of the First Corps found the bridge destroyed at Château Thierry and the passage was effected by pontoons, during which operation the British guns kept the enemy engaged and the town suffered considerably from shell fire. Many prisoners and some guns were taken on both banks, and in the woods round the town the battle eventually degenerated into a gigantic man-hunt, batches of Germans ten to twenty strong being rounded up by the British and forced to surrender. By nightfall the right of the First Corps was in touch with the left of the French 5th Army, and the British line from left to right ran from Chamigny through Charnoust and Coupru to the west generally of Château Thierry. During the day's operations the Germans suffered heavy losses in killed and wounded, some hundreds of prisoners were taken, and from reports brought in by airmen all through the afternoon it was now clear that the retreat of the German Ist Army had definitely begun.

The French 5th Army.—Like the British Army the French 5th Army was this day directed to the Marne, although, owing to the fact that the river valley trended generally north-eastward above Charly-sur-Marne, only the left flank of the 5th Army was actually expected to cross the river during the day. The orders issued by General Franchet d'Esperey were generally as follows :—

The 2nd Cavalry Corps was to be reinforced by a brigade of infantry and was to preserve contact with the British.

[1] *Diary of a Subaltern. The Advance.*

It was to cross the Marne at Azy, and on the right bank it was to operate against the columns of the retreating enemy.

The 18th Corps was to advance on Château Thierry.

The 3rd Corps was to move northwards from Montmirail following the general line of the railway to Condé-en-Brie, with Montigny as its objective.

The 1st Corps was to be prepared to operate eastward on the Vauchamps plateau so as to assist the 10th Corps if required.

The 10th Corps was to act under the orders of the commander of the 9th Army.

The 51st, 53rd, and 69th Reserve Divisions were to act as the army reserve and were to be concentrated about Artonges.

On the left the 18th Corps, after some severe fighting, reached Chateâu Thierry, where it crossed the river and joined hands with the right of the British First Corps. The position of the 2nd Cavalry Corps at nightfall is not quite clear, but it seems that for some reason or other it did not cross the Marne until the next day, possibly because the bridge at Azy was being used by the British troops. As for the 3rd Corps in the centre, none of the authorities consulted conveys the idea that its march to Montigny was interfered with otherwise than by desultory fighting by the tail of German rear-guards. But further to the right the 1st Corps was called upon to render the assistance which General Franchet d'Esperey had contemplated in his orders. During the day, while the 1st Corps was in position north-east of Vauchamps, news came that the 10th Corps was being pressed towards the marshes of St. Gond. True to the principle of mutual support which was so characteristic of the French commanders throughout the

battle, General Franchet d'Esperey ordered his 1st Corps to incline to the south-east and to attack the right flank of the German Xth Corps, an operation which brought immediate relief to the French 10th Corps and contributed not a little to relieve the somewhat uneasy position of the French 9th Army on the right.

The success achieved by the 5th Army since the battle of the Marne had opened had been very great, and from his headquarters at Montmirail during the evening of the 9th General Franchet d'Esperey, in an order to his troops, placed on record his gratification at their exertions. But though the tone of the document is marked by the conventional and dramatic language characteristic of such utterances, the commander of the 5th Army was too practical a soldier to conceal from his men the fact that what had happened was only a preliminary to further fighting, and that the enemy had been scotched, not killed. His words were :—

"Soldiers! on the historic fields of Montmirail, Vauchamps, and Champaubert which a hundred years ago witnessed the victories of our ancestors over Blücher's Prussians our vigorous offensive has triumphed over the resistance of the Germans. Harried on his flanks, his centre broken, the enemy is now retreating east and north by forced marches. The finest corps of Old Prussia, the contingents of Westphalia, Hanover, and Brandenburg have fallen back in haste before you. But this initial success is only a prelude. The enemy is shaken but not decisively beaten. You will still have to endure severe hardships, to make long marches, and to fight hard battles. May the image of your country remain ever before your eyes. Never was it more necessary to sacrifice all for her. I salute the heroes fallen in the fighting of the last few days,

and my thoughts turn to you—the victors of the next battle. On, soldiers, for France!"

The French 9th Army gives ground.—The situation of the 9th Army as it existed on the morning of the 9th September was briefly that the left was clinging to its ground in a rather exhausted condition, while the right flank, alone of all the constituent parts of General Joffre's forces, had on the 8th been forced to yield a considerable portion of terrain to the enemy. A further retrograde movement would undoubtedly detract greatly from the success which was elsewhere attending the Allies' efforts, and in no portion of the line was the 9th September more critical than in the centre.

General Foch, however, was not the man to be dismayed by what he obstinately refused to regard as other than a temporary set-back, and in his orders for the day he stated that the situation was excellent and that the offensive was to be everywhere the rule. The German armies opposing him were, however, imbued with the same sentiments, and a day of extreme tactical interest was the result. On the French left the sorely tried Moorish and 42nd Divisions, which were now acting with the 10th Corps of the 5th Army, were again called upon to show their mettle and to withstand further bitter attacks by the Germans. This they managed to do—the conduct of the Moorish Division receiving special commendation afterwards—thanks in a great measure to the assistance rendered by General Franchet d'Esperey's 1st Corps in the manner already described.[1] The commander of the 9th Army, however, did not allow himself to be magnetized by the severe fighting which was so persistent on his left, and so soon as he perceived that

[1] The Moorish Division consisted entirely of white troops, i.e. Marine Infantry and Zouaves brought from Morocco.

the assistance from the French 5th Army had checked the enemy, he withdrew the 42nd Division and placed it at Linthes and Pleurs as his army reserve. For he realized that the only way to restore the situation on his right was by attack, and every man not urgently required elsewhere must be utilized on that flank.

The situation in the centre and right had, indeed, changed decidedly for the worse during the forenoon. The 9th and 11th Corps had been strongly attacked by three German corps—the Guard Corps of the IInd Army and the XIIth and XIIth Reserve Corps of the IIIrd, or Saxon, Army. It is not quite clear whether any of the Guards got through the marshes of St. Gond—probably a small holding force advanced this way—but the bulk of the corps, as well as the Saxons, debouched about Fère-Champenoise. As a result of the fighting which ensued the right of the 9th Army was forced still further back from Gourgançon to Salon, and in sympathy with this movement the 9th Corps in the centre had to release its grip on the exits from the marshes and to give ground too. The 42nd Division was by this time concentrated in the army reserve in rear of the centre, and about 4 p.m. orders were sent to it to counter-attack in the direction of Fère-Champenoise, a movement which was to be assisted by a general offensive all along the line. Not much progress, however, was made during what was left of the 9th September, and the situation remained anxious, although it was distinctly improved by the proximity of the 21st Corps of the 4th Army, which was now operating in the gap hitherto filled only by the 9th Cavalry Division. Here it just escaped being attacked. For the centre corps of the German IIIrd Army was actually awaiting the signal to assail Mailly when orders to retire reached it. The general situation of the French 9th Army at nightfall was as follows :—

The 10th Corps (*5th Army*) was on the line Fromentières —Baye.

The Moorish Division was on the line Mondement—Allemant.

The 9th Corps carried on the line thence to Connantre.

The 42nd Division was probably by this somewhere on the line Connantre—Corroy or in front of it.

The 11th Corps was in the woods south of Gourgançon and had been reinforced by all or portion of the 18th Division of the 21st Corps from the 4th Army.

The 60th Reserve Division was east of Salon.

The 9th Cavalry Division was still on the right flank south of the line Semoine—Mailly—Sompuis.

The 52nd Reserve Division was probably in reserve.

The French 4th Army.—The persistent efforts with which the Germans had now for some days been endeavouring to break the Allied centre caused French General Headquarters to send orders to the commander of the 4th Army to attack with his left in the most vigorous manner possible. General Langle de Cary's original left corps—the 17th—had managed to extend its outer flank a couple of miles south-west of Humbauville and thus to gain close touch with the 18th Division of the 21st Corps. An advance was made by these troops against what appears to have been about a division of the IIIrd Saxon Army, and although the Saxons were supported by heavy artillery posted north-east of Sompuis they were unable to withstand the *élan* of the French infantry, and after some very violent fighting had to give way. It is stated that a son of General de Castelnau fell mortally wounded by a shell in the struggle. In some places the retirement of the Saxons was marked by considerable disorder, and they were mercilessly harried by the French field guns, which played upon

them with deadly effect during their retreat. This successful attack, which brought the French line to within about a mile of Sompuis, did much to diminish the gap between the 4th and 9th Armies, which was still further lessened by the 43rd Division of the 21st Corps. That division, it will be remembered, had passed the night at Dampierre, and during the 9th it moved north-west to the vicinity of Trouan, thus carrying on the line of the 4th Army a stage further to the west. This, however, did not represent the sum total of General Langle de Cary's efforts to relieve the situation of the 9th Army on his left. Finding that his centre and right could hold their own he sent a division from his Colonial Corps and another from his 2nd Corps to the left bank of the Marne. Even this subtraction from his available force on the right bank did not lead him to adopt merely a passive attitude elsewhere, for the 2nd Corps on the right was attacking all day on the line Sermaize—Andernay in close connexion with the 15th Corps of the 3rd Army on its right. In the centre the 12th and Colonial Corps were attacked during the day; but no change in their general line took place, although the German VIIIth Corps, which had its right about Vitry-le-François, was reinforced by three regular regiments which arrived from Luxemburg and Belgium.

Although French troops did not enter Châlons till two days later, more than a flutter of excitement seems to have been caused in that town even by the night of the 9th by the activity of the left of the French 4th Army during the day. A German army headquarters had taken up its quarters in a leading hotel, and late in the evening of the 9th the staff had retired after what is described as "an excellent dinner and much riotous drinking." Towards midnight there were hurried steps in the passages, and the general and his staff were hastily aroused by shouts of

"The French are here." In fifteen minutes the hotel was empty.[1]

The French 3rd Army.—Owing to the uncertainty which still existed as to the situation along the Meuse immediately behind him, General Sarrail still felt constrained to adopt a more or less watchful attitude, except on his left flank where attack was the order of the day. There the 15th Corps, acting in conjunction with the right of the 4th Army, still maintained its efforts towards Contrisson and succeeded in winning some ground before evening. But in the centre and on the right the French operations were purely defensive. In the former sector the 5th and 6th Corps were subjected to somewhat severe howitzer fire throughout the day; but this bombardment was not followed by infantry attack, and the French line in consequence remained exactly as it had been the day before. On the right, about Nubécourt and St. André, the 65th, 67th, and 75th Reserve Divisions were attacked by the XVIth Corps of the Crown Prince's Army, but here, too, the French beat off the attacks, which, like those of the previous day, were not characterized by particular vigour. Undoubtedly the Crown Prince was growing uneasy at the possibilities which the fortress of Verdun on his left rear might contain, an uneasiness which the commander of the French 3rd Army did his best to foster. For the 72nd Reserve Division, which stretched north-westward from Osches, was again put in to worry the Crown Prince's communications running south-east from Clermont, a task carried out in the most enterprising spirit although at the cost of rather heavy casualties. The situation of the Crown Prince's Army was indeed not at all unlike that of General von Kluck's army a few days before,

[1] This incident is related by Captain X of the French staff in an article on the battle of the Marne in *Scribner's Magazine*, October, 1915.

Verdun taking the place of Paris and the French 6th Army having its counterpart in the 72nd Reserve Division. News of the unpleasant surprise which had met General von Kluck had, of course, by this reached the Crown Prince, and his hesitation to be involved in another Ourcq can be readily understood.

But it was not only behind the Crown Prince that black care sat. General Sarrail had his share of anxiety. As early as nine o'clock news had reached him that the Germans were bombarding another of the river forts, below Fort Troyon, and all the information pointed to the conclusion that the cannonade was being carried out by heavy Austrian siege pieces—intelligence which showed that the Germans were anxious to settle the river forts business quickly. Soon after came the news that Fort Troyon had been silenced,[1] but that it had beaten off some infantry assaults. Reconnaissance by air also brought in word that the right bank of the Meuse above Verdun was seething with activity, hostile infantry, cavalry, artillery, and long lines of transport having been signalled marching towards the river. The threat against the Meuse was thus growing more disquieting every hour.

Further bombardment of Fort Troyon.—Fortunately for General Sarrail the commandant of Fort Troyon was determined to maintain the fort which had been entrusted to him to the bitter end. During the night of the 8th–9th the garrison had been kept on the alert by outbursts of musketry fire; but no actual assaults were delivered although several false alarms contributed to the general anxiety of those within. So soon as dawn broke the German 6-inch guns reopened fire and at once began to do severe damage, one of the first shots striking an ammuni-

[1] This report was not quite accurate, for some of the guns of the fort were replying to the German fire during the afternoon. See p. 213.

tion store and exploding some shells. By this time the French 2nd Cavalry Division was reported well on its way from Toul, and its arrival was anxiously awaited, though as events were to prove it did not come up till nearly twenty-four hours later. The Germans summoned the place to surrender during the morning by sending forward a *parlementaire* with a message from the commander of the attacking side, but although the summons was twice repeated the commandant of the fort persisted in his emphatic refusal. The Germans thereupon increased the severity of their fire, which was carried on not only by the 6-inch pieces they had hitherto been using, but also by siege artillery up to nearly 12 inches in calibre. As can easily be realized the havoc caused in a cupola-furnished fort of old design like Fort Troyon by modern weapons like these was very great ; yet in spite of the damage done the garrison was still able to keep some guns in action even during the afternoon. When night fell there was another alarm of an infantry attack, which proved to be amply justified, for swarms of assailants were detected pressing forward towards one of the cupolas of the fort, and some of them were even cutting the wire entanglements which surrounded it. The garrison, however, immediately opened a fierce machine-gun fire. This proved too much for the Germans, who broke and fled, leaving the ground strewn with their dead and wounded.[1]

The Germans bombard Nancy.—Foiled in their attempt to take the Grand Couronné by assault, the Germans vented their wrath in somewhat characteristic fashion by bombarding Nancy itself. After the unsuccessful attack upon the 8th, a few hours' truce had been arranged between

[1] This account is based almost entirely upon the narrative of the fighting contained in *Verdun to the Vosges*, by Gerald Campbell, which gives an extremely interesting account of the operations in that region.

the combatants for the purpose of burying the dead, and it is believed that the Germans took advantage of this respite to place two heavy guns in position near Cerceuil. Be this as it may, these guns opened fire on Nancy towards midnight upon the 9th, and some seventy shells dropped into the streets of the town. The damage done was trifling, and any moral effect which the Germans may have wished to produce on the inhabitants was discounted by the fact that a violent thunderstorm was raging at the time, which prevented a large number of citizens from realizing that the place was actually being shelled. So soon as it was light the French guns quickly got to work on the two German pieces and silenced them almost at once. The whole affair was singularly futile, and it has always been considered that the Germans were animated by mere spite rather than that they were carrying out any definite plan.

Summary of the 9th September.—According to trustworthy reports, the German Emperor on the evening of the 9th September, found himself compelled to sign an order for the general retreat of the five armies between Paris and Verdun. A summary of the day might therefore be confined to the statement that the Germans had acknowledged defeat and that, therefore, the French had won a victory. This, however, is somewhat beside the point, for the question to consider is how the situation presented itself to the French generalissimo at the end of the day. He could not, naturally, have been aware of the issue of the momentous order of the German Emperor, and his conclusions had to be based upon results actually known. On the Ourcq the crisis had been passed with clear gain to the French 6th Army. But in the centre the dent in the Allied line had extended still further south, and on the Meuse above Verdun the Germans were still making vigorous

efforts to batter down Fort Troyon, which was clearly in great difficulties. Considered thus in its barest outline, the advantages gained must have appeared largely to outweigh the failures on the right and centre, and General Joffre probably hoped that the coming day would see a retrograde movement of the German armies pronouncing itself.

That the Germans would thus have to acknowledge defeat was extremely probable, but the extent of his own victory remained problematic. General Joffre had experienced constant retreat, himself, almost since the war broke out. But he had never for a moment allowed retreat to affect his determination to use it purely as a means of resuming the offensive at his own time and under his own conditions. Such time and conditions had occurred, and General Joffre had been quick to use them. But he was too experienced a commander not to be aware that both sides could play at the game of utilizing retreat to bring victory, and he was certainly not the type of general to imagine that ability to do so successfully was confined to one side.

Everything therefore depended upon the capacity of his armies to so press the pursuit as to deny to the enemy the power of re-forming within a reasonable time or within a reasonable distance, and thus to prevent his finding a favourable situation for retaking the offensive. Such was probably all General Joffre could legitimately expect. For when the opposing sides in a battle run each into millions, annihilation by envelopment may probably be looked upon as a thing of the past. This had indeed just happened at Tannenberg where the Russians had met disaster, but there the numbers engaged were much smaller than at the Marne.

This opens up the question as to whether a modern

battle can ever be decisive in the accepted sense of the word.[1] Accepting as an axiom that the complete envelopment and destruction of the five German armies was absolutely out of the question, the opinion may be hazarded that if General Joffre were to be able to place two of them out of action the battle would be a "decisive" one. With their total forces so reduced, the Germans could not possibly have maintained themselves in France during the period which would be required to receive reinforcements from Germany, and during which the Franco-British Armies, then decidedly superior in numbers, would be mercilessly battering the broken remnant of the invaders. Such a result could hardly fail to be decisive. For there is no doubt that the sight of the splendid German military machine—for that it certainly was—thrown out of France after a triumphal march to the very gates of the capital must have produced such an effect throughout the civilized world as would almost certainly have brought the conclusion of the war within measurable distance.

Like all speculations based on the hypothetical result of a battle, this one is of little more than academic interest. But the 9th September marked the crisis of the battle, and the day ended with the scales inclining towards the Allies. The student will certainly not find his interest in the remainder of the narrative grow less if he sets up a standard, however arbitrary, which the Allies should have reached to have merited for their victory the term decisive, and if he then examines the ultimate result to see how

[1] The term "decisive" is here used in its limited sense as equivalent to "of such effect as to lead directly to an early conclusion of the war." In the sense used by Hallam, by which a decisive battle is one which would materially alter the history of the world, had it ended differently, the Marne was undoubtedly "decisive."

far, if at all, their ultimate success fell short of his anticipations.

Before concluding the summary of the 9th September a word may be said as to the operations of the French 9th Army in the Allied centre. The tactical ability of General Foch in saving the line from fracture has given rise to somewhat exaggerated statements to the effect that on this day he "drove a wedge in between the IIIrd and IVth German Armies." The legend has indeed gained so much credence as to have induced some writers to assert that it was to the situation created by this wedge that the retirement of General von Kluck's army from the Ourcq was due. But a careful study of authoritative French sources of information will clearly show that the operations of the 9th Army on the 9th September were as they are given on page 208. And, without wearying the reader with a mass of references to sources, accessible only with difficulty, the following paragraph from the pen of a French staff officer who took part in the battle may be considered sufficient. Discussing the 9th September he writes: "The right of Foch's army had given way, while the left was still holding out. Instantly he transferred an excellent division from left to right, taking the Germans by an unexpected flanking movement and *checking their advance.*" The italics are not in the original; but the words are so emphasized to show that what was achieved by General Foch on the 9th September was something very different from the insertion of a wedge between two German armies.

CHAPTER XIV

THE BATTLE OF THE MARNE (*continued*)
OPERATIONS OF THE 10TH SEPTEMBER

Maps 7, 2, 5.

The French 6th Army crosses the Ourcq.—To a commander of the ardent temperament of General Maunoury the night of the 9th–10th September must have seemed interminable, though such news as came in was to the good, confirming the intelligence of the general retreat of the German Ist Army. Still, Nanteuil and Betz had to be cleared of the enemy, and to this the operations of the left of the 6th Army were devoted early in the morning of the 10th; but by this time the Germans holding the places had dwindled to mere rear-guards, which were soon driven north. Etavigny also fell into the hands of the French without much difficulty, as did Acy-en-Multien, Etrepilly, and Vareddes. Many of the villages evacuated were in flames, and at Etrepilly, where the Germans had suffered enormous losses, the French found immense bonfires made up of piles of straw and dead bodies over which inflammable oil had been liberally thrown. The left wing of the 6th Army pushed forward towards Crépy-en-Valois, where it came in touch with a German column, and where it halted so as to allow the right to swing up into line. That wing, supported by a reserve cavalry brigade and acting in concert with the British, sent

some of its troops across the Ourcq and moved up both banks astride of the river. Only slight opposition was met with from the cavalry screen which had been left to cover the retreat of the German Ist Army. The right of the French 6th Army made good progress, so that by evening General Maunoury was on a line which generally speaking ran east and west, with his left about Raray and his right at La Ferté-Milon in touch throughout with German rear-guards. The main body of the German Ist Army bivouacked for the night north of the Forest of Villers-Cotterêts.

In a simply worded but stirring order of the day, forwarded to General Maunoury at Claye, General Joffre placed on record his profound appreciation of the splendid work of the French 6th Army during the past five days. He stated frankly that he had called upon it to do even more than its duty, and that it had responded to his appeal in a manner which had surpassed even his fondest hopes. He went on to say that any skill on his part had been rewarded by the supreme honour of having soldiers like those of the 6th Army inder his command. In the concluding paragraph he struck a rare personal note by testifying to the emotion which he felt at being able to thank the 6th Army for furthering the object he had striven for during forty-four years—revenge for 1870. It was an admirable and moving order, both in its generous appreciation and in its soldier-like restraint.

The British Army in pursuit.—In pouring rain the advance of the British was resumed at daybreak, opposed by strong rear-guards of all arms. The advance was in echelon from the right—that is to say, the First Corps from Château Thierry was the most advanced, while the Second Corps followed to the left rear of the First, and the Third Corps from La Ferté-sous-Jouarre was to the left rear of

the Second, the whole being covered by the cavalry. Not much opposition was experienced, and though many parties of the Germans were rounded up the bulk of them were glad to surrender. Still, here and there stragglers of stouter calibre were only taken after a stubborn resistance. In all thirteen guns, seven machine-guns, about two thousand prisoners and quantities of transport fell into the hands of the British during the day; and the Germans left many dead on the field. Some of the woods, however, still concealed small isolated bands who lay hid until the British Army had passed, only to incur capture by the Sixth Division which marched across the battlefield on its way north three or four days later. A somewhat remarkable incident occurred in the advance —though one not altogether uncommon during a pursuit. The Sixth Brigade of the First Corps in its advance toward the north found itself marching parallel with another infantry column some distance off. At first it was naturally supposed that the latter was also British, but suddenly the discovery was made that it consisted of retreating Germans. The British guns were hastily brought up and got the range at once, and for about two hours a battle in miniature went on. Finally the British brigade advanced across the open towards the cutting where the Germans were holding out and prepared to charge them with the bayonet. But the Germans had had enough of it and the remnant of about four hundred were all standing with their hands up and waving white flags. They seemed to be absolutely broken and only too glad to be taken prisoners. "After some of the things I saw in the cutting I don't wonder at it. Our guns had just smashed the place to bits."[1] This was perhaps the most noteworthy incident of a day of somewhat desultory fighting, at the

[1] *Diary of a Subaltern : The Advance.*

end of which the British Army lay generally disposed within the area St. Quentin—Cocherel—Priez with its outposts thrown forward northwards towards the Ourcq, which here flows in a westerly direction.

The French 5th Army on the Marne.—The close of the previous day's fighting had left the French 5th Army with its left corps—the 18th—well forward at Château Thierry and the remainder of the army some distance south of the Marne. General Franchet d'Esperey contented himself on the 10th with sending General Conneau's cavalry corps forward and bringing up the remainder of his army in line with the 18th Corps. The cavalry accordingly crossed the Marne about Château Thierry and pushed on by the road leading due north from that town towards Soissons. The enemy rear-guards halted several times during the day, but the French cavalry acted with great dash and by evening had gained the line Oulchy-le-Château —Fère-en-Tardenois, with their left in touch with the British. The 18th Corps remained about Château Thierry, and during the day the 3rd Corps and the Reserve Divisions came up on its right and bivouacked by the Marne. On the right flank, the 1st Corps had been acting in immediate co-operation with the 9th Army, but on this day it pushed on north so as to keep touch with its proper army and it reached the north-east of Condé-en-Brie, with outposts towards the Marne. The advanced guards of the various corps crossed to the right bank and captured many isolated groups hiding in the woods. In all, during the day, the 5th Army took four guns, six machine-guns, fifty wagons, and fifteen hundred prisoners.

Attack by the French 9th Army.—The attack which General Foch had planned for this day was to take place north and south of the marshes of St. Gond, the general plan being as follows: On the left, the 10th Corps was to

move eastwards, north of the marshes, with the object of striking at the flank of the German forces which had forced back General Foch's right wing. South of the marshes the Moorish Division was apparently withdrawn into the second line after its severe exertions of the past few days. The 9th Corps, keeping its left on the southern edge of the marshes, was to advance towards Ecury-le-Repos, keeping to the north of the Sézanne—Fère-Champenoise railway; on its right was to be the 42nd Division, which was to take Fère-Champenoise in its advance. Further still to the right the 11th Corps, with the 18th Division which was still attached to it, was to make for the line Lenharée—Sommesous, while the cavalry was to make all the headway possible in the general direction of Châlons.

It does not detract from the merit of General Foch's tactical plan that his prompt and vigorous effort to retrieve a dangerous situation was to meet with comparatively little opposition, and to succeed probably far beyond his hopes. Whether the commanders of the German IInd and IIIrd Armies were acting in accordance with an Imperial order of the evening before, or whether they had no option but to act in sympathy with the retrograde movement of the Ist Army on their right, is not quite clear; the point is in reality immaterial. The main fact is that the enemy's retirement had set in as far east as Sompuis, and General Foch's task was thus enormously lightened. His attack started about dawn, and it was immediately apparent that the enemy's resistance was simply that of rear-guards. So rapidly were the French troops allowed to advance, that by 9 a.m. the 42nd Division was in possession of Fère-Champenoise, with the 9th and 11th Corps keeping well in line to the left and right respectively, so that early in the afternoon the task assigned by General Foch had been accomplished. For the bulk of his army

was by that time on the line Sommesous—Ecury-le-Repos.

The advance had been so rapid that General Foch now proposed to push on some miles further to the north-east; and, thanks to the continued retirement of the Germans, this was effected by nightfall; the 9th Corps, 42nd Division, and 11th Corps actually reached the line Villeneuve—Germinon—Vatry, while the 9th Cavalry Division on the right got almost as far as Châlons. On the other flank the 10th Corps, working along the northern edge of the marshes, had not been able to make such rapid progress and had to be satisfied with taking up the line Colligny—Voipreux. This disposition of the 9th Army gave it the exact appearance of a wedge, and, inasmuch as the bulk of the German IInd and IIIrd Armies fell back across the Marne towards the line Fismes—Rheims and the remainder of the IIIrd Army and the right of the IVth Army were forced back by the left of the French 4th Army towards the Châlons—Vitry-le-François road, it is correct to say that a wedge was driven into the German line. But the operation took place on this day, the 10th, when the Germans were in retreat, and not, as is sometimes stated, on the 9th, when they were advancing in the centre. In other words, General Foch's striking success was due as much to the efforts of the French 6th Army on the Ourcq as to the excellence of his own tactical plan or to the resolution with which his soldiers carried it into effect. General Foch transferred his headquarters to Fère-Champenoise during the afternoon, where many prisoners, including some officers, were taken in an advanced stage of intoxication.

In dealing with the day's operations some accounts speak of the alleged fate of two German corps which are supposed to have been driven into the marshes of St. Gond and to have suffered very severely in their attempt to extricate them-

selves from the slough. It is quite possible that small bodies of Germans which had crossed the marshes from north to south were forced back into the swamps and severely hustled. But such bodies certainly did not amount to more than a fraction of two army corps and were possibly but weak detachments.[1]

The Left of the French 4th Army moves forward.—When the VIIIth Corps, on the right of the German IVth Army, seized Vitry-le-François, that town, which was an important road and railway junction, was constituted a centre of resistance by the construction of considerable works to the south of it, in which were installed heavy guns. This was to prove of considerable advantage to the Germans during the 10th September, for the left of their IIIrd Army, consisting of the XIXth and a division of the XIIth Corps, was enabled to pivot upon it and thus to avoid complete retreat. At dawn the left of the French 4th Army attacked east and west of Sompuis and the Saxons were driven north of the Sommesous—Vitry-le-François road, an operation which progressed to the disadvantage of the invaders. For during the afternoon their division of the XIIth Corps became involved in the retirement of the IInd Army before General Foch, and was driven in some confusion to the south-east of Châlons, where it reached the Marne after dark. The remainder of the Saxon left wing seems to have swung back, holding on to Vitry-le-François with its left flank. Against that town the centre of the French 4th Army made considerable efforts during the day, but the German heavy guns in their earthworks completely checked the attack, and this seems

[1] Just as the operations of the French 6th Army in the battle of the Marne are frequently referred to by the subsidiary title of the battle of the Ourcq, so the operations of the 9th Army from the 7th–10th September are frequently spoken of by the title of the battle of Fère-Champenoise.

to have reacted on the right of the 4th Army, for no progress was there made, nor does much seem to have been attempted. The sum-total of the achievements of General Langle de Cary for this day was, therefore, the short advance of his left wing to the Sommesous—Vitry-le-François road.

The French 3rd Army.—Although there was a very fair amount of fighting during the day between the armies of General Sarrail and the Crown Prince, it did little to relieve the stalemate which had set in between Revigny and Verdun. Both sides attacked. The French left, formed by the 15th Corps, made appreciable progress through the woods south of Andernay and Sermaize and wound up the operation by gaining possession of both those places—or rather what was left of them. The Germans had been particularly destructive in this quarter of the field, and the passage of the Crown Prince's army was, throughout, invariably marked by a wanton orgy of ruin. To the right of the 15th Corps the 5th Corps also attacked, and gained a fair measure of success.[1] Between Vaubecourt and Revigny the Germans had over 7000 casualties, but much of this loss was probably incurred in a very violent attack made by the centre of the Crown Prince's army, composed of the XIIIth and XVIth Corps, reinforced on this day by the VIth Reserve Corps which took up its position between the other two. The attack was delivered, generally speaking, on the line St. André—Vaubecourt, and, unlike the efforts of the German Vth Army of the past few days, was delivered with extreme violence. The French 6th Corps, however, stood firm, aided as it was by two Reserve Divisions near Souilly, and the German effort died away by evening, although it

[1] Laimont and Villotte-devant-Loupy had passed by this into German hands and were not recovered this day.

would seem from indirect evidence that the French had to give ground slightly. The inclusion of the VIth Reserve Corps in his centre had compelled the Crown Prince to transfer his Vth Reserve Corps from the right bank of the Meuse and to post it on his left to protect his communications against any threats from Verdun. Against these communications the French 72nd Reserve Division about Osches, aided by some more troops from Verdun, continued its determined efforts. These had the effect of stirring up the Vth Reserve Corps to make a brisk attack, and by the end of the day the French Reserve Division was beginning to show signs of the strain caused by its excellent work of the past few days. The situation in his rear was still somewhat disquieting to General Sarrail. But by evening it was known that Fort Troyon was holding out, and the good news which kept coming in from the western flank tended to lessen the feeling of uneasiness which had been caused by the German effort to cross the Meuse.

Fort Troyon relieved by troops from Toul.—The story of the gallant defence of Fort Troyon has been brought up, in the previous chapter, to the repulse of a German infantry attack carried out under cover of darkness during the first hours of the night of the 9th–10th. The Germans thereupon resumed the bombardment and, soon after this had recommenced, the intrepid commander of the garrison was severely shaken and injured by the bursting of a shell from one of the German heavy guns. So soon as his wounds were dressed, however, he returned to his post, animating the garrison by his example and maintaining command in the severe bombardment which still continued. But the long-expected assistance from Toul was now at hand. Somewhere about dawn the 2nd Cavalry Division, accompanied by a mixed brigade, arrived on the scene

and promptly set to work to deal with the attackers, with the result that the Germans were forced to desist from the bombardment. This, however, was not to be the end of the German attempts against Fort Troyon, for their efforts were resumed upon the following day and were not finally abandoned until the 13th. A week later they were to resume their efforts once again, but with many more troops, were to force their way across the Heights of the Meuse to the river, and, aided by the supply of men and ammunition from Metz, were to drive in the great wedge into the French lines known as the St. Mihiel triangle. The story is, however, outside the scope of this volume, which will bring the story of the Marne Campaign to its conclusion on the evening of the 12th September.

Summary of the 10th September.—It will be of interest before dealing with points peculiar to the 10th September to reproduce the French official *communiqué*,[1] which gives a précis of the battle to the evening of that day in the following terms :—

"As already announced, a battle has been in progress since the 6th September on the general line Paris—Verdun. Early in the battle the German right wing (the army of General von Kluck) realized that it must give way before the enveloping movement which threatened it. By a series of rapid and skilful movements this army managed to escape from the pressure by which it was menaced, and threw itself with the bulk of its forces against our enveloping wing north of the Marne and west of the Ourcq. But the French troops operating in this region, powerfully aided by the bravery of our English allies, inflicted considerable losses on the enemy and gained time for an offensive to progress elsewhere. As matters stand in this quarter

[1] Issued at Paris at 2 p.m., 11th September, 1914

of the field the enemy is retreating towards the Aisne and Oise, and has therefore fallen back sixty to seventy-five kilometres in four days. Meanwhile the Anglo-French forces which were operating south of the Marne have continued their offensive. Starting from the region south of Esternay they have crossed the Marne and are north of Château Thierry. Severe fighting took place from the beginning of the battle round La Ferté-Gaucher, Esternay, and Montmirail. The left of General von Kluck's army, as well as the army of General von Bülow, are retiring before our troops. In the region of the plateaux north of Sézanne and Vitry-le-François the severest of the fighting has taken place. There the left of General von Bülow's army, the Saxon army, and portion of the army commanded by the Duke of Würtemberg were engaged. By a succession of violent attacks the Germans tried to break our centre, but in vain; our success on the high ground north of Sézanne has enabled us in turn to pass to the offensive, and during last night the enemy has broken off the fight between the marshes of St. Gond and the neighbourhood of Sommesous so as to fall back to the region immediately west of Vitry-le-François.

"On the Ornain and between the Argonne and the Meuse, where the armies of the Duke of Würtemberg and the Crown Prince are engaged, fighting of a give-and-take nature still goes on without any sensible change in the general situation. The first phase of the battle of the Marne has, therefore, been decided in favour of the Allied armies, for on the right the situation remains without any marked change. In the Vosges and in front of Nancy some long-range German guns attempted a bombardment.

"Both from the strategical and tactical point of view the general situation has been completely transformed in the past few days. Not only have our troops arrested the ad-

vance of the Germans, which the latter believed to be the prelude of victory, but the enemy is almost everywhere falling back before us."

This admirable précis conveys such a clear impression of the general situation as it existed on the evening of the 10th September that it requires but little amplification. It is worth while, however, to consider for a moment the great change which had taken place in the Allied front during the day. No longer a continuous concave line, the Allied armies were now echelonned in four distinct fractions with the left well forward. Thus, the French 6th Army, the British Army, and the 2nd Cavalry Corps of the French 5th Army were, generally speaking, on the line Raray—La Ferté-Milon—Fère-en-Tardenois. Behind them, with its left at Château Thierry and stretching eastwards thence along the Marne towards Epernay, was the French 5th Army. Both these groups faced north. Further still to the rear was the French 9th Army, facing north-east, on the line Villeneuve—Vatry, while behind that again came the French 4th and 3rd Armies, more or less on their original alignment Sompuis—Vitry-le-François—Revigny —Verdun. It is doubtful whether communication was maintained between these four groups other than for the transmission of information by telegraph, and, as each group was beyond immediate supporting distance of its neighbour, the general situation was not tactically ideal. Particularly was this the case of the most forward Allied group, the left flank of which was entirely in the air and the right flank of which was a good ten miles north of the French 5th Army on the Marne. It must be pointed out, however, that the situation of the Franco-British armies was extremely favourable for a change of front to the north-east, a movement which General Joffre had in view,

and the fact that the forward group was not counter-attacked by the Germans shows the extent of the defeat as clearly as any other feature of the battle.

But in spite of the extent of their defeat and of the difficulties of the roads—for on the 10th the rain fell in torrents—the German retreat was never a rout. The retirement was extremely well managed and all the heavy guns were got away in safety. The plans for the retreat had evidently been prepared with characteristic thoroughness, and the last of the infantry escorting the guns were hurried away in motor-cars. Field-guns and prisoners were lost, but in the circumstances the losses were by no means large. More than one prisoner stated that the orders given to his party were that they were to hold their ground, delaying the Allies, until the whole party were killed or captured. The number of prisoners taken may also be due in part to the fact that on the west of the battle-field the main duty of stopping the British and French 5th Armies was left to German cavalry, who were supported by infantry detachments. When resistance was no longer possible the cavalry were able to get away, whereas the infantry had no choice but to surrender. The Germans, too, fully accepted the doctrine that guns may be honourably lost in covering a retreat, and several instances of heroic devotion to duty on the part of German batteries have been recorded; in one case only a single man escaped unhurt, while round the guns were found ninety dead artillerymen.

One of the features of the battle was the employment of aerial reconnaissance, in which new development of warfare the Allies showed conspicuous ability. To give a rough idea of the work carried out it is sufficient to mention that during the period of twenty days which closed on September 10th, the British Royal Flying

Corps alone showed a daily average of more than nine reconnaissance flights, each of over one hundred miles. The constant object of the aviators of the Allies was to effect the accurate location of the German forces, and incidentally—since the operations covered so large an area —of their own units. This important service did not, however, preclude attacks upon hostile aircraft, and in the battle of the Marne the Allies established so decided an ascendency in the air that the Germans became much less enterprising in their flights. Unlike later stages of the war, the battle of the Marne was not signalised by bomb-dropping to any great extent, although on the few occasions when it was practised by the Allies satisfactory results were obtained. The principle was constantly kept in view that the main object of military aviators is the collection and transmission of information, while denying the power of doing so to the enemy. Aerial artillery observation was not yet practised.[1]

By the evening of the 10th September it seemed probable that the Germans would use the ground near Verdun as a pivot for their left. Now that the capture of part of their armies was no longer probable, the burning question yet to be answered was :—How far could their right wing be forced back ?

[1] It was first practised at the battle of the Aisne.

CHAPTER XV

THE BATTLE OF THE MARNE (*continued*)
CONCLUSION OF THE BATTLE

Maps 7, 2.

The German rear position.—There is a general belief that the invasion of East Prussia reacted on the battle of the Marne in that, immediately before the latter commenced, four or five German corps were hurriedly entrained and transferred from the Western to the Eastern Front. It is possible that General von Kluck's flank march may have been partly due to this diminution of the German strength in France and Belgium, because any reduction in the forces available in the west would naturally lead to an endeavour to concentrate the remainder as much as possible. It also has been stated that when the German Emperor sanctioned the step of transferring troops from the Western to the Eastern Front before a decisive result had been obtained in France, the German Headquarters Staff became uneasy lest their hitherto victorious advance might meet with a sudden check, and that the need for some position to which the armies could fall back, and where they could reform, was perceived. Whether troops were transferred from west to east in large numbers early in September is not exactly known. It has been vehemently asserted and has been denied with

equal warmth.[1] But even in the full tide of a victorious advance a prudent general will choose a favourable position as a second line, to which he may retire should the unexpected happen—as it often does in war. Nor does the preparation of such position either preclude or imply reduction in the strength of his forces. Be this as it may, the Germans during their advance in France left technical troops and large working parties to entrench a carefully selected position which extended from a point on the heights of the Meuse, north of Verdun, westwards, across the Argonne and the plain of Champagne, to Rheims. There it turned north-west, including four of the forts surrounding the city, and extended across the Aisne near its confluence with the Suippe to Craonne. From there it ran westwards along the heights on the north bank of the Aisne to the Eagle Forest north of Compiègne. The position was a very strong one and formed three completely different sectors. The eastern portion was formed by the heavily-wooded contorted country of the Meuse and the Argonne ; in the centre was the open rolling plain of the Champagne-Pouilleuse ; the western section from near Craonne to Compiègne lay along the crest of the main ridge from three to five miles north of the Aisne. It was on to this position that the Germans, pivoting on the left flank of the Crown Prince's army, swung back their right and centre to stand at bay before the next move should be begun.

The story of the 11th and 12th September is concerned with this retrograde movement of the Germans and with the

[1] For the assertion in a German source see p. 252. According to a French authoritative source only some cavalry divisions and heavy artillery were transferred, but other French authorities incline to the German view, and the balance of evidence is in favour of the theory that several army corps were sent from France and Belgium to the Eastern Front.

corresponding advance of the Allies, an advance which was practically unimpeded in the west but was opposed with increasing strength the further the battle-front trended towards the east. It will be convenient to deal with the Allies in the four echelons into which their line had been formed on the 10th. But before treating of the most forward one—the French 6th Army, the British Army, and the French 2nd Cavalry Corps—a word must be said about a French force which had been operating still further to the west.

A French cavalry raid.—It will be remembered that early in the battle the French 5th Cavalry Division was operating beyond the left flank of the 6th Army,[1] but as its mission was an independent one and was not destined to have any effect on the battle, no further mention has till now been made of it. The 5th Cavalry Division had been in garrison at Rheims before the outbreak of war, and on the 31st July, as portion of the *troupes de couverture*, it was pushed forward to the frontier near Sedan and entered Belgium on the 6th August.[2] Here it was engaged in reconnaissance work until the 19th, when orders reached it at Gembloux to retire into France, which it did near Charleroi. It then became involved in the general retrograde movement of the Franco-British Armies and continued its retirement until it reached Paris during the last days of August.

When the battle of the Marne began, the exposure of the German right flank offered an invitation for hostile enterprises, and on the 6th September the 5th Cavalry Division entrained at Versailles and proceeded to St. Mard. Thence it marched towards the forest of Villers-Cotterêts,

[1] See p. 165.

[2] It formed part of General Sordet's 1st Cavalry Corps. See text *passim*.

and on the 8th it began to take part in the battle, orders being given to it to waylay and capture a German convoy. The prospect of a raid was received with enthusiasm by all ranks and the operation opened favourably, a young dragoon single-handed entering a farm and holding up a party of Prussian staff officers, covering them with his revolver and compelling their surrender. During this day the division seems to have been split up and the bulk of it apparently spent the night in the Forest of Villers-Cotterêts, where, however, it was detected by German aeroplanes flying at an extremely low elevation. This seems to have robbed the enterprise of all prospect of success, and the chances of a favourable issue were further diminished by the fact that instead of finding themselves on the extreme right flank of the Germans—or rather behind it—the French horsemen discovered hostile infantry moving down from the north, who were possibly portions of the VIIth Reserve Corps hastening southwards from Maubeuge. At any rate, the expedition miscarried. The cavalry regiments, operating without a base, were soon in sore straits for food, and the blind thickets of the forest provided an unsatisfactory field for mounted work.

Soon the unpleasant fact became apparent that the Germans had stopped the exits from the forest, and it was with the greatest difficulty that the French horsemen inside it stole westwards under cover of darkness. Just before it reached the western edge of the forest the 22nd Dragoon Regiment descried a German transport column six miles long, but no attack was made, the situation in which the regiment found itself being too precarious. The fact that this column was going north was a source of considerable surprise to the French troopers, for no news had been received as to the course of the battle and the

idea that the Germans had been defeated and were in full retreat was not at first entertained. The division still held on westward and the various fractions into which it had become dissolved had exciting experiences in the dash for the shelter of the Forest of Compiègne. There news reached it from other French cavalry patrols that the battle was over and that the Allies were in full pursuit. Verberie was now assigned as the rallying-point of part, or all, of the division, and on the 12th September the reconstituted detachments marched round the south-west corner of the forest and headed for Estrée St. Denis, where they took up a position on the left of the French 6th Army. Thus ended what was apparently the sole independent cavalry operation during the whole battle of the Marne.

The advance of the forward echelon of the Allies.—The German right wing fell back in good order but in considerable haste, and by the 12th General von Kluck with the German Ist Army was holding the western section of the new position from the Eagle Forest to the plateau of Craonne. For that portion of the Allied Armies charged with the pursuit of General von Kluck, the battle had really terminated on the evening of the 10th. Little fighting, and this only of a rear-guard nature, characterized the next two days. During the 12th the French 6th Army was approaching the heights south of the Aisne, west of Soissons, and in the afternoon its right was called upon to dislodge a German advanced post south of that town. The British immediately brought their guns into action in co-operation with the French, with the result that the enemy troops were driven across the river, but they destroyed the bridges. The left of the 6th Army bivouacked for the night in the Forest of Compiègne.

At dawn on the 11th the British Army broke up from its billets and bivouacs and the further pursuit of the

enemy began. The three corps crossed the Ourcq practically unopposed, and during the day the cavalry reached the line of the Aisne, the First, Second, and Fourth Cavalry Brigades passing the night on the high ground about Couvrelles and Cerseuil, while the Third and Fifth Cavalry Brigades bivouacked south of Soissons. As regards the main body, the First Corps, on the right, reached the line Bruyères—Oulchy-le-Château. In the centre the Second Corps was about St. Remy. On the left the Third Corps lay slightly in advance, about Louatre. Orders were issued during the night for the British Army to deploy along the south bank of the Aisne between Bucy and Bourg, and on the following day—Saturday, the 12th September—the first real check to the British advance was experienced. Reconnaissances by the cavalry ascertained that strong hostile detachments, supported by artillery and machine-guns, were holding the town and bridge of Braine and the heights beyond. It was becoming clear that the Germans had retired in accordance with a prearranged plan. From the opposition encountered by the French 6th Army to the west of Soissons, by the British Third Corps south-east of that place, bythe Second Corps south of Missy and Vailly, and from other indications all along the line, Sir John French found himself, during the afternoon, faced with a new situation.

The field-marshal came to the conclusion that the enemy had, for the moment at any rate, arrested the retreat and was preparing to dispute the passage of the Aisne with some vigour. South of Soissons, as has already been narrated, the Germans were holding an advanced post against the French 6th Army. To its aid came the Fourth Division of the British Third Corps, which had arrived at Buzancy during the morning, and now joined in the artillery duel with the result above described.

But although the position occupied by the Germans was obviously a formidable one, Sir John French was determined not to abandon his attempt to keep the enemy on the move so far as possible. The first point was to make good the southern side of the valley, preparatory to forcing the passage of the river, and for this Braine had first to be seized. Braine is a village of considerable size and its occupation by the Germans practically denied access to the river along the strip from Missy to Pont-d'Arcy, a fact which led General Allenby, the cavalry commander, to decide on driving the enemy out without delay. To the First Cavalry Brigade was assigned the task of clearing out the defenders, who consisted of a battalion of infantry occupying loopholed houses and protected by barricades erected across the streets. The brigade advanced from Cerseuil to the edge of the valley and, leaving the horses under cover on the higher ground, advanced down towards the River Vesle on foot. A sharp fight ensued for Braine, in which the Queen's Bays did excellent service and in which the Third Division afforded valuable support. Eventually the place was captured and the Germans were cleared out of the town, while shortly afterwards strong hostile detachments were driven off the high ground beyond. The Germans suffered some three hundred casualties in the engagement, which came to an end about midday, and a large amount of field-gun ammunition was found in the River Vesle, where it was visible in two feet of water.

Having dispossessed the Germans of Braine the British Army approached the south bank and took up a position for the night. The First Cavalry Division[1] remained about

[1] The cavalry was now organized in two divisions, the First Cavalry Division consisting of the First, Second, and Fourth Brigades, the Third and Fifth Brigades forming the Second Cavalry Division.

Braine ; of the First Corps the First Division marched to Vauxcéré and the Second to Vauxtin ; of the Second Corps the Third Division made its way to Brenelle without encountering any further opposition, but the Fifth Division in approaching Missy was brought to a standstill by the enemy's fire and was unable to get nearer than Sermoise. The Third Corps remained about Buzancy ; this corps was soon about to be reinforced, for the Sixth Division had arrived at St. Nazaire on the 10th and was now being railed up to Coulommiers on its way to the front. Further to the left the Second Cavalry Division took post about Chaudun. It does not appear from official reports that the Aisne was actually crossed by any British troops on the 12th, but from private letters it seems probable that a detachment of the First Division got across at Bourg during the evening and that the Eleventh Brigade of the Fourth Division crossed near Venizel and gained a footing on the further bank between Crouy and Missy. The day closed with torrential rain, which seriously impeded the transport service of the pursuers.

The centre echelons of the Allies.—As regards the French 5th Army, covered as it was by the 2nd Cavalry Corps, its advance seems to have been absolutely uninterrupted. On the 12th it prolonged the line of the British with its right thrown back and facing generally north-east, so that it lay on the line Fismes—Epernay.

The French 9th Army likewise had no difficulty to contend with during the day and reached the Marne between Epernay and Châlons. On the following day a move was apparently made towards Rheims, Châlons remaining as the headquarters of the army commander, General Foch. On the side of the Germans, General von Bülow held the ground from the left of the Ist Army about Berry-au-Bac, eastwards and south-eastwards along the Suippe and

towards Rheims. The Saxon general, von Hausen, about this time fell sick and the troops of his IIIrd Army seem to have been joined to General von Bülow's forces for a time. According to one report the withdrawal of General von Hausen was preceded by an outburst on the part of the German Emperor to the effect that, having been defeated by General Foch at Fère-Champenoise, General von Hausen should blow his brains out. The story is most probably untrue, and so savage a criticism would certainly have been completely unwarranted. General von Hausen had been within an ace of success in his attempt to break the French line. The failure was not his, for his retirement was enforced by the retreat of the armies on his right, if it was not indeed actually made in direct compliance with an Imperial order.

The French 4th and 3rd Armies.—The first object on which the commander of the French 4th Army concentrated his attention was the capture of Vitry-le-François, and this he proceeded to carry out by throwing forward his left wing to envelop it from the west, while at the same time making a frontal attack. In accordance with this plan the 17th and 21st Corps marched north-east towards the section of the Marne river line between Châlons and Vitry-le-François, while the 12th Corps demonstrated before the latter town. The Duke of Würtemberg, however, clearly realized that the position of his IVth Army was extremely precarious and the French met with but little resistance. Vitry-le-François was evacuated by the Germans before noon, the French 12th Corps passing through the town and halting for the night astride of the Marne a few miles further north. By this time the 17th and 21st Corps—the former of which was now on the left—were along the river north and south of Mairy. On the other side of Vitry-le-François the Colonial Corps

crossed the Saulx during the day and went into bivouac in Changy and the neighbouring villages. Further to the right the 2nd Corps, acting in conjunction with the 15th Corps of the 3rd Army, held the line of the Ornain between Etrépy and Sermaize. On the next day—the 12th—the 17th, 21st, and 12th Corps crossed the Marne[1] and headed for the line Courtisols—Poix—Somme-Yèvre, while the remaining two corps were set in motion towards Possesse and Charmont. The German IVth Army and such Saxon troops of the IIIrd Army as had been pinned against the Marne offered but little resistance, falling back to their allotted sector of the new German position on the left of General von Bülow.

The German Vth Army, however, gave more trouble. For the rôle of the Crown Prince was to mark time as the pivot of the great German wheel, and he appears to have carried out the task with some skill. His attitude on the morning of the 11th was almost entirely passive, for his mission was to gain time, and he probably realized that time could be gained equally well and with less risk by awaiting attack than by initiating it, especially if the troops awaiting the attack were set to work to strengthen their positions, as the German Vth Army was. An impressive calm, therefore, heralded in the 11th September between Revigny and Verdun. It was, however, soon broken by General Sarrail, for whom a policy of attack was obviously prescribed. The left corps of his 3rd Army—the 15th—was still working in close connexion with the right of the 4th Army, and during the day this co-operation bore fruit. For late in the afternoon the 15th Corps crossed the Marne Canal, occupied Revigny and deployed south-west with its right upon that town, while later still a movement was made towards Brabant-le-Roi. Opposed to this

[1] Portion of the 12th Corps was already on the right bank.

corps during the day had been the German XVIIIth Reserve Corps,[1] which was rather roughly handled by the French and had to acknowledge the loss of four guns, five machine-guns, and other spoil. This success of the 15th Corps reacted on the 5th Corps immediately to its right, for the guns of the former aided the latter to retake Laimont and Villotte-devant-Louppy; while still further to the right the 6th Corps and the two Reserve Divisions had been feeling for the enemy and discovering that a retrograde movement was taking place, until they were checked by an entrenched position which the Germans had constructed south of Souilly. The day therefore closed with a slight gain for the left flank of the French 3rd Army, while the Crown Prince's left maintained its ground.

There is some disagreement as to the dates of the further stages of the retirement of the German Vth Army after the 11th September, but it would appear that on the 12th the French 3rd Army again attacked and found the German trenches more formidable than ever. These, however, were almost certainly occupied merely by rear-guards, which enabled the main body to fall back upon a line running north-east and south-west through Triaucourt. From there the retrograde movement was continued, pressed by General Sarrail, who saw the importance of recovering for Verdun the St. Ménehould—Clermont—Verdun line of railway. The Crown Prince finally brought his army to rest across the Forest of Argonne, his right about Vienne-la-Ville, his centre at Varennes and his left at Montfaucon. This movement was probably not completed for a day or two after the 12th; but it has been included in the narrative as marking the definite end of the operations included under the general title of the battle of the Marne. Some slight readjustment of the German front now took place,

[1] Of the German IVth Army.

and in an official *communiqué* issued at Paris during the afternoon of the 16th September the enemy's line was thus described :—

"The enemy front is thus traced out : the neighbourhood of Noyon, the plateaux south of Vic-sur-Aisne and Soissons, the tableland of Laon, the heights north and west of Rheims, and a line which passes north of Ville-sur-Tourbe (west of the Argonne), and is prolonged on the other side by a line passing north of Varennes (now abandoned by the enemy) to the Meuse near Forges Wood, north of Verdun."

Summary of the 11th and 12th September.—The settling down of the German armies behind the shelter of an entrenched position was perhaps the most eloquent confession of failure they could have made. Their retirement to the Aisne, and to the line which stretched thence westward to the Meuse, cannot satisfactorily be explained away. It has been termed in German documents "a strategic withdrawal," but such a euphemism could only have applied had the Germans still retained the power of manœuvring, which was essential if they were genuinely desirous of accepting the test of another and early pitched battle in the field. This power, however, they had lost, and there is all the difference in the world between the retreat of the Germans from the Marne and of the Allies from the Franco-Belgian frontier. In the latter case General Joffre consistently refused to surrender the capacity for manœuvre, and never for a moment lost sight of the offensive which he was determined to initiate at the very earliest opportunity. With the Germans the predominating idea when worsted on the Marne was, on the contrary, to seek protection. Henceforth they were on the defensive —in the enemy's country it is true, and with a great slice

of conquered territory behind them, but still indubitably on the defensive.

It is not intended to imply that by sinking into the shelter trenches on the Aisne the Germans *ipso facto* forswore all intention of a future offensive campaign. But it is the fact that by the course they pursued they were temporarily to forfeit the initiative, and that the initial advantage they had gained by their sudden declaration of war and their rapid dash through Belgium was to melt away in the torpor of a passive defence. This subject lies outside the scope of the present volume, but it is legitimate to call attention to the fact that when the Allies fell back behind the Marne in their great retreat it was under the burden of the recollection of a fortnight's almost unrelieved disaster, while when the Germans withdrew to the Aisne and Suippe they had experienced what was really no more than a smart set-back in a course of hitherto uninterrupted victory. General Joffre had turned at bay and attacked with indomitable resolution. The German higher command was content to accept a war of entrenchments, to surrender the initiative, and to neglect the priceless factor of time. When the story of the Great War comes to be written with the wealth of detail and in the breadth of perspective which the lapse of time can alone afford, the inevitable comparisons which will be instituted between the achievements of the rival leaders during this opening phase of the contest will assuredly be in favour of the French commander-in-chief.

CHAPTER XVI

APPRECIATION OF THE BATTLE

Maps 5, 2, 7.

The German point of view.—An attempt has been made to emphasize the various features as looked at from the Allies' point of view by summaries dealing with each day's operations. No further appreciation from that standpoint is now required, but it is of extreme interest to study the German versions and to analyse the reasons given in German works for the great set-back. It should first be stated that the German authorities in their official *communiqués* issued at the time, touched on the battle of the Marne with a reticence which merged into absolute mendacity. Of this the following *communiqué*, dated Berlin, 10th September, 1914, may be taken as typical: "East of Paris [German] detachments which had advanced to the Marne and across it have been attacked by superior enemy forces coming from Paris, and between Meaux and Montmirail. These detachments held the enemy, and after hard fighting, which lasted two days, they have gained ground. News having been received as to the approach of new and strong enemy columns, the [right] wing of these detachments has fallen back without being anywhere pursued." A reference to the narrative of the battle for the days immediately preceding the issue of this *communiqué* will probably leave the reader with an impression rather different to that which its authors

wished to inspire. Another official document lightly touches on the great battle of the Marne as " the indecisive combat on the Ourcq." Early in 1916 there was published in Berlin an anonymous pamphlet bearing traces of official inspiration and entitled *Die Schlachten an der Marne, Sept. 6th to 12th*, 1914. This throws considerable light on the German situation as it existed in September, 1914, and is of extreme interest to the student of the Marne Campaign.[1]

The writer of the pamphlet justifies the German march through Belgium on the ground that the Government had proof that the Belgians would have been prepared to fall on the German troops whilst the latter were engaged in France. In view of this it was decided by the German General Staff that the greater number of the available troops should be thrown on the Western Front, and that the defence of the eastern border of the Empire should be entrusted to a few army corps. It was hoped that these would, in combination with the Austro-Hungarian armies, be able to stem the advancing tide of the Muscovite colossus for a few weeks. New German formations, the active troops returned from France, and reserve corps coming to their aid would enable them to assume the offensive. But it was not proposed that an attack should be made over the whole of the Western Front simultaneously. The German General Staff had, on the contrary, decided to maintain the defensive on the line between the Swiss border and Donon, and even between this latter peak of the Vosges and Verdun only to pass from the defensive to the offensive according to circumstances, since the troops placed there had as their chief task the holding in check of

[1] The views expressed in this particular summary are those of the writer of the pamphlet referred to, and most of the précis here given is made up of verbatim extracts.

the enemy forces opposed to them. On the other hand, it was proposed that the main body of troops in the west should be sent from their bases between Diedenhofen and Aix-la-Chapelle and hurled into France through Luxemburg and Belgium, so that it would be possible to extend the right wing further and further in the direction of the sea. This movement was intended to take the form of a broad sweep, by Brussels, Valenciennes, Compiègne, and Meaux, to the west of Paris, so that the French forces should be driven back over the Meuse, the Aisne, the Marne, and even the Seine, might be outflanked south of the Forest of Fontainebleau, and their whole line of battle crumpled up. Other German troops, especially reserve and landwehr corps, were then to be hurried to the coast between Dunkirk and Calais, with the object of preventing further British troops from landing. This scheme was to have been carried to a successful issue before the end of September, 1914, and the victory would have released a large number of army corps, which could then have been sent against Russia. But the plan failed owing to the great difficulties experienced in carrying it out.

The German General Staff undoubtedly foresaw that their plan might fail and that it might have to be changed in the course of its execution. For, if the task given the German left wing (the Vth and VIth Armies) of holding in check the strong French forces opposed to them at Nancy, Toul, Verdun, and the other fortified places on the Meuse, was a difficult one, that of the centre (the IIIrd and IVth Armies) and of the right wing (the Ist and IInd Armies) was almost superhuman. The armies of the centre and the right had not only to break down the fortresses and the field resistance of the Belgians, but had also to carry out a march of several days under a terrible August sun before they could come into contact with the French, who were dis-

posed in their own chosen positions and had not to trouble themselves about reinforcements. The German advance was countered by the skilful retreat of the French and British forces opposed to the invading troops, and the writer of the pamphlet declares that he is unable to decide which is more worthy of admiration—General von Kluck's strenuous endeavour to bring Sir John French to a standstill and force him to give battle, or the rapidity with which the British Army was hurried southward and evaded the outstretched claws of the German general.

The Franco-British retirement seriously affected the invaders' plans, for the further the Germans advanced, and the more skilful the French and British showed themselves in effecting a retreat without allowing a decisive battle to be fought, the more did the Germans separate themselves from their bases and did they exhaust themselves by their strenuous march. They used up their munitions and food at a terrible rate, and the slightest check in the supply of reinforcements and food might have been absolutely fatal to such masses of men as the Germans hurled into France and Belgium in August, 1914. General Joffre, on the other hand, was fighting within his own lines, and was gradually drawing nearer and nearer to his depôts. It became possible eventually for fresh troops to be sent to the French lines every day, so that General Joffre and his staff were in the fortunate position of being able to put fewer exhausted troops into the firing line than their opponents ; for the Germans had been marching almost day and night for a month. It is frankly admitted in the pamphlet that the French line, although it was very thin indeed at various points, was never actually broken through by the Germans.

From the official French statements which have been published, the writer of the brochure deduces the formation

of new armies by General Joffre, and he mentions that on September 6th Sir John French supported General Maunoury, though he did not seem to have recovered from the German onslaught in August. General von der Marwitz was directed to hold the British in check, and he covered the movements of the remaining German forces on this front by a skilful use of his cavalry. September 7th, says the writer, was a day of furious combat. General von Kluck was attacked by Sir John French and General Maunoury, and he had not only to extricate his troops from these two armies, but had also to see that he was not cut off from General von Bülow, nor outflanked by General Maunoury towards the north. His main task on this day was to get his army back across the Marne to the north bank, and by September 8th he had almost accomplished this. On the 9th General von Kluck made a determined effort, exhausted though his men were, to break up the forces under General Maunoury and Sir John French, and his general attack was launched with skill and determination. This move, however, had been forestalled by General Gallieni, Military Governor of Paris, as he was at the time, who had kept himself well informed of the movements of all the armies. General Gallieni requisitioned motor-cars in every direction, and sent them northward during the night, laden with troops, to the aid of General Maunoury. Particularly noteworthy was the transport of the 62nd (Zouave) Division during the night of September 8th–9th, in order that the turning of the French left wing might be prevented at all costs.

These strenuous efforts of General Gallieni, worthily seconded by Sir John French and General Maunoury, achieved their aim. By the evening of the 9th the German power of offensive had sensibly weakened, and General von Kluck's iron legions, exhausted by their heroic efforts of

the previous days, had reached the limit of their resources. At noon on the 9th General von der Marwitz was compelled to inform his chief that it was no longer possible for him to withstand the combined attacks of the British Army and the 18th Corps of the French 5th Army. With a heavy heart General von Kluck, subjected to continually greater pressure on his left wing, had to arrange with the Chief of the General Staff to give the order for the battle to be broken off. During the night of September 9th–10th the German army was withdrawn northward in good order. When the French sought to continue the battle on the following morning they found that General von Kluck had disappeared, taking his army with him.

The writer particularly praises General von Kluck because he endeavoured to outflank the French on their extreme left, and because he did not retire on Rheims, when he broke off the Marne engagement, but actually extended his line in the neighbourhood of Compiègne and Soissons. If this manœuvre had not been carried out, says the writer, this time using italics, the Germans would in all probability not have been able to extend their front to the coast after the fall of Antwerp, nor to hold their positions there in spite of the efforts of the Allies to break through them. This retreat of General von Kluck's army, however, necessitated a reorganization of the whole German line, and General von Bülow, General von Hausen, the Duke of Würtemberg, and the German Crown Prince had to retreat correspondingly.

The pamphlet concludes with reasons why the Chief of Staff, General von Moltke, was forced to withdraw the German armies somewhat to the north. The reasons given are as follows :—

1. The armies of the right and centre had become

exhausted in consequence of the almost continuous fighting and marching. They had lost a large proportion of their effectives and were no longer in good physical condition.

2. In consequence of the rapid march through Belgian and French territory the measures for providing reserves of men and supplies of food and munitions were found to be inadequate.

3. The German General Staff reckoned upon the fortresses of Liége, Namur, and Maubeuge falling sooner than they did. The advance of the Ist and IInd Armies was checked in consequence of their holding out, and General Joffre was able to complete his preparations for a stubborn stand on the Marne.

4. Several German army corps, which might have turned the scale at the Marne, were delayed at Antwerp.

5. The Russian Government planned the war in the spring of 1914, as is shown by the fact that they had begun their mobilization arrangements so far back as that time. According to the estimates of all experts—even those on the Entente side—the Russians should not have been able to begin their offensive movement before the middle of September, in view of their system of mobilization and the long distances over which the men had to be brought. The Russian offensive, however, began in the second half of August, not only against East Prussia, but against Austria-Hungary as well. The adhesion of Japan to the Allies' cause tended to facilitate Russian preparations for a European contest. Neither Germany nor Austria had counted on such a rapid mobilization on Russia's part. Before, therefore, all the German armies destined for France could be sent to the Western front at the end of August reinforcements had to be hurried to the east. (It has been noted in the French *communiqués* that German troops were shifted

from the west to the east between August 28th and September 7th, 1914. The fact is that several army corps had to be taken from France at the end of August, as well as several from the interior of the Empire, and hurried to the threatened Eastern front.)

Another German version.—In *Von der Marneschlacht bis zum Fall Antwerpens* a German writer, Anton Fendrich by name, presents a narrative of the battle, accompanied by a consideration of the causes which led up to the retrograde movement of the hitherto successful invaders in September, 1914. He begins by saying that the first days of that month were days of breathless expectation throughout the world. All over Germany the burning question was how long could Paris hold out, to which the generally accepted reply was that the French capital could not stand a month. Then came the unexpected news that General von Kluck had altered the direction of his march and had left Paris wide on his right. Some uneasiness now commenced to make itself felt throughout the Fatherland, which was only in part relieved by an official intimation on the 10th September that the Ist Army had fallen back, having taken 5000 prisoners and numerous pieces of artillery. For the moment the impression was created that the German armies had been successful in some clever strategic manœuvre, but this was soon disturbed by echoes of French rejoicing over a great victory. Explanations for the German retirement were then tentatively demanded, and replies of a soothing nature were freely given.

The German writer now referred to begins by reminding his readers that a repetition of the days of 1870 was not to be expected, and that General Joffre had all along determined that in case of a French defeat on the frontier, the safety of the French armies depended on a prompt with-

drawal into the great fortress-triangle Paris—Verdun—Dijon.[1] This plan he had the courage to put into force until in his orders of the 4th September he suddenly changed over to the offensive. "The joyful news spread from the French regiments to the black Spahis and Senegalese; and from the British to the Ghurkas and the dusky cavalry of the cut-throat Sikhs."[2] The writer then hints that General Joffre stood his ground too soon and that he abandoned his Fabius Cunctator strategy under political pressure. As regards the Germans, he points out that although the battle of Tannenberg had just been won in East Prussia, at the time of the change in direction of General von Kluck's march, immense masses of Russians were still available and ready to press forward; this caused some doubt to be entertained as to the wisdom of putting everything to the hazard in France. There was always the possibility to be considered that the French and British "with their black allies" might prove to be too strong, and that the German armies might be drawn so far from their supply depôts as to incur the risk of being cut off from them.

Passing to the action of General von Kluck in moving the bulk of his army south-east, while leaving one corps on the Ourcq, the German writer refers to a mysterious plan—"a plan so wonderful and so full of genius that only in time to come will mankind grasp its full greatness"[3]—which would meet the dangerous situation. Before explaining the plan, the writer makes a diversion, to emphasize the fact that what occurred formed a part of the original German intention, namely, the destruction of the enemy's field army as the first measure, to be followed by the

[1] Dijon is not shown on Map 1. It is about 160 miles S.E. of Paris.

[2] No Indian troops took part in the battle of the Marne.

[3] . . . *ein Plan, so genial und wundersam, dass ihn erst spätere Tage in seiner ganzen Grösse werden erfassen können.*

capture of Paris. Consequently the first duty of General von Kluck was to persevere in his determination "to push on after Field-Marshal French and his flying English."

Before revealing the mysterious plan the German writer, however, confronts his readers with three questions which the latter are called upon to answer themselves. These are :—

1. Did General von Kluck realize the disproportion which existed between the single German corps which he left on the Ourcq, and the French 6th Army ?
2. Or was it that, although aware of this disproportion, he was misled by the ease with which he had already disposed of the French 6th Army near Amiens ?
3. Or was it possible that, in sending his main body across the Marne, he intended all along to withdraw it suddenly, so that when the French 6th Army had risen at the bait formed by one German corps it might find itself involved in a struggle with the whole German right wing ?

In other words, was General von Kluck's plan of leaving but one corps on the Ourcq while his main body hurried south-east, due to ignorance, temerity, or extreme guile ? The German writer rather shrinks from a decision and says "the reader must judge by facts." But he commits himself later to the statement that when General Joffre on the 4th September, after being informed by his airmen of General von Kluck's south-easterly march, issued orders for attack, "Fabius Cunctator could not resist the German lure." There follows a fairly accurate précis of the fighting of the battle of the Marne[1] which eventually leads up to an ex-

[1] The chronology of the battle, however, is dubious, and within the space of seven lines the German writer refers to the "9th Army of General Maunoury"; "the 9th Army of General Foch"; and "the 9th Army of General Langle de Cary."

planation of the fact that the Germans, in spite of the super-excellent plan, were compelled to break off the battle and retire. The reasons given are, in substance, as follows :—

1. Both sides eventually became completely exhausted. But since the enemy, "by his own admission," disposed of double the forces of the Germans, the latter were compelled to fall back from motives of ordinary prudence.

2. The Russians, though defeated at Tannenberg, had still immense forces available, were threatening Silesia and were penetrating into Galicia.

3. It was clear that the Austrians could not withstand the Russians unassisted.

4. Italy was "treading the path of treachery," and the French were in consequence able to withdraw troops from the Franco-Italian frontier.

To sum the disquisition of this writer up, General von Kluck swerved aside from Paris because his mission was to assist the other German armies in the destruction of the Allied mobile forces. This demanded a flank march which General von Kluck determined to utilize in a somewhat remarkable way. His plan was to leave an ostentatiously small force upon the Ourcq which would lure on the French 6th Army and that army would then be dealt with by rushing back the main body of the German Ist Army. The French 6th Army rose at the bait, but extraneous causes prevented the Germans reaping their due mead of success.

The explanation contains many discrepancies and may be described, for want of a better word, as "thin." But although the German writer is forced to account for the German retreat, he holds his ground and closes his story of the battle of the Marne with the statement that, whatever reasons for the order to retire may be put forward after the war, the fact that the retreat after the

battle of the Marne was "a strategic manœuvre of the highest genius" can never be altered. The brochure is perhaps of little military value, but it is not without interest as typifying the Prussian arrogance which insists on investing Prussian generals with an *aura* of infallibility. It, moreover, furnishes an example of the kind of military literature with which the German public is fed.

The flank march of the German Ist Army.—A point which is certain to leave the student of the battle in some perplexity is the flank movement carried out by General von Kluck on the 4th September. Nor is much enlightenment to be found in the German narratives just referred to other than the statement—perfectly accurate so far as it goes—that the Allied armies, not Paris, formed the primary objective of the invaders. A more thorough examination of what was the outstanding feature —and indeed the origin—of the battle of the Marne will not be out of place, and it will be convenient to deal with this in two phases, *i.e.* the change in the advance of the German Ist Army, and the direction taken consequent on that change.

As regards the first it has often been asserted either directly or by implication that the German Ist Army was intended to invest Paris and that this intention was only abandoned so late as the 4th September. It is certain that during the closing days of August the eyes of the world were fixed upon the French capital and that the entrance of the victorious invaders was awaited with breathless interest, an expectation which was fostered by the exodus of thousands of the inhabitants, and more especially by the removal of the French Government to Bordeaux. But the conclusion that Paris was the first objective is not warranted by any sound evidence. In the first place the investment of the capital of a country, the

field army of which is still undisposed of, had come to be regarded as a strategic heresy peculiarly abhorrent to the German school of thought. The great apostle of that school, General von Bernhardi, had pointed out that the fall of a fortress, even of Paris itself, would not necessarily decide the issue of a Franco-German campaign.

There were circumstances, too, connected with Paris which rendered its capture a military problem of immense difficulty. Since 1870 the whole defensive scheme of the capital had been altered, and the girdle of forts had been flung so far out in the country that the perimeter exceeded eighty miles. For a successful investment and siege operations, such as those conducted in the Franco-Prussian war, a force of at least 500,000 men would have been required. It is true that the value of the forts was uncertain in view of the success with which the German heavy artillery had overcome the defences of Liége and Namur, and of the ground in the vicinity of some of them having become so encumbered with villas and buildings as seriously to interfere with the field of fire. But even allowing for these circumstances the task of investing Paris was obviously beyond the capacity of General von Kluck's army. It might have been possible for that army to have concentrated its efforts on one point and to have battered its way through one section of the fortifications. But such an operation was bound to be extremely costly. It would require considerable time to develop to a conclusion. It would be open to the grave objection that communication between Paris and the outside world would remain open during the attempt, so that the whole essence of a siege —the cutting off of the place attacked from outside help— would be absent. It is as clear as anything in war can be that Paris offered a problem much too severe for a single German army to solve.

No less manifest is it that for the German armies as a whole Paris was not in the early days of September, 1914, the immediate objective. A glance at the map will show that, by the end of August, the advance had perforce taken such a form that only one extremity of the long German line would have come in direct contact with the capital. Recollections of the campaign of 1870 doubtless misled the spectators of the drama of 1914, and gave rise to the expectation that the curtain would rise on a second and greater siege of Paris. It was forgotten that the circumstances were entirely different nor was the sequence of events in the war of 1870 clearly remembered. In that campaign the investment of Paris was subsequent to, and only made possible by, the almost complete annihilation or immobilization of the French field armies. Even enjoying these advantages the Germans had experienced very great difficulty with Paris and the raising of the siege had even been contemplated. No two military situations could really have been more dissimilar than that which existed in the original week of Sedan and that which was revealed during its anniversary in 1914. Once more, it is true, the French had within a month of the firing of the first shots—and within a fortnight of the first great battles—been defeated and driven from the frontier. But though they—and their British allies—had suffered discomfiture they were far from being destroyed in the military sense. Till that should be brought about, the question of occupying the French capital could only be of secondary importance to the councils of the German General Staff. For the occupation of territory, the reduction of fortresses, and the seizure of the enemy's capital are but means to an end—the end being the forcing of a decision by the dispersion, disarmament, or capture of the enemy's main fighting force.

It would be foolish to ignore the profound effect which

the capture of Paris must have produced throughout the world, or to deny the influence which it would have exerted on vacillating neutral States. The occupation of Paris was undoubtedly part of the German plan of invasion. But it was to be strictly secondary, in point of time, to the destruction of the Franco-British armies. So generally accepted is this theory, and so completely is it in agreement with the dictates of strategy—not to mention common sense—that it need not be further laboured. There are, nevertheless, still some who cling to the legend of the "hussar-ride to Paris" and who buttress up their case with the flimsiest of evidence. Even the light-hearted "*Nach Paris*" chalked up on the railway carriages by departing German troops in the exuberance of military enthusiasm, is produced as an argument in favour of the contention.[1] It is, therefore, incorrect to talk of a sudden change in the German plan of campaign as having taken place on

[1] It is, however, an historical fact that during the forward rush of the German right wing the American Ambassador in Paris received a telegram from his colleague in Berlin to the effect that the German Foreign Office had requested that all necessary precautions should be taken for the safety of the American colony in view of the fact that the Germans were shortly about to enter Paris. The exact date of the entry was given in the telegram. The explanation for such optimism on the part of the German General Staff appears to be that by the time the German right wing should draw near to Paris it was expected that the Franco-British Armies would have gone down in crushing defeat, and that the bulk of the German armies would then repeat the history of 1870 and proceed to Paris. And, further, that the threat of bombardment would lead to the instant surrender of the capital, from which the Government was preparing to withdraw as early as August 31 (see p. 114), a fact which had almost certainly come to the knowledge of the German Intelligence Staff through its Secret Service Department. The fact that such telegram was received by the American Ambassador in Paris—and there is no shadow of doubt but that it was received—does not necessarily invalidate the contention maintained in this volume that the capture of Paris was to be strictly secondary in point of time to the destruction of the Franco-British Armies. It merely shows that an unwarranted optimism over the latter factor was guiding the German War and Foreign Offices during the first weeks of the war.

the 4th September, 1914; but this statement still leaves the move made by General von Kluck on that day unexplained.

His reasons can only be grasped by reviewing the situation as it existed to German eyes on the date in question, and although precise data as to numbers, supplies, the state of communications, and the physical condition of the troops are still lacking, enough is known to justify an appreciation of the situation on general grounds. It will be necessary to revert to the very first stages of the war. As has been stated in the text, Germany's plan when she drew the sword against Russia on August 1st, was to send four-fifths of her army into France, leaving the remaining fraction to hold Russia in check in conjunction with the Austrians. The object was to crush the French armies, occupy Paris, and, having dictated peace to France, to transfer the bulk of the German armies against Russia, whose mobilization was expected to be slow. Speed was therefore essential in the French campaign which must be concluded in time to admit of the transfer of troops from west to east before the Russian mobilization should be completed, towards the end of September. Before the German Army was properly in motion, England had entered the arena and the speed which had been essential before now became absolutely vital. The German strategy aimed at envelopment and therefore demanded an advance upon a broad front, overlapping the Allies in the west. It was splendidly organised and vigorously pressed. But it failed, and the 4th September found the German battle line well forward in France in circumstances which were by no means strategically ideal.

What were these circumstances? To understand them it is necessary to examine closely the disposition of the

armies forming the German right. Up to the 29th August the Ist and IInd Armies had been in touch with each other, but after that date they drifted apart. The IInd Army after its fight at Guise on that day passed by Laon, and by the evening of the 5th September is known to have crossed the Marne between Dormans and Epernay ; so that at nightfall on the 4th it was probably on a line east and west of Ville-en-Tardenois, or slightly further to the north. On the morning of that same day the Ist Army was on the line Creil—Senlis—Nanteuil. Allowing for the difficulty of estimating where the protective fringes of either army ceased and the effective fighting core began, it will not be incorrect to say that thirty to forty miles lay unbridged between the armies of General von Kluck and General von Bülow on the 4th September. This was a decidedly alarming state of affairs, seeing that the German Ist Army was almost at the gates of Paris, which might prove to be a veritable reservoir of French troops, while further towards the east the Germans had a defeated but not demoralized enemy to their front. Their antagonists in reality occupied a position of immense strength ; for each flank rested on a powerful fortress, one of which has been described as the strongest in the world.

Such were the salient facts as they must have presented themselves to the eyes of the German General Staff. Threatening as it was in any case, the situation was aggravated by the interposition of the new French 6th Army. It has been contended that the existence of this army was unknown to German Headquarters until the 5th or 6th September, when its appearance west of the Ourcq came, it is alleged, as a complete surprise. But it is doubtful whether this plea will stand investigation. The French 6th Army first came on the scene on the 28th August, when its 7th Corps began detraining at Amiens, which

city was captured by the Germans on the 31st. With the highly organized intelligence service at the disposal of the invaders, and in a large place like Amiens which could have harboured a multitude of spies, it is impossible to believe that the Germans after entering the city remained in ignorance of the fact that troops had arrived from Alsace a few days before. From the evidence of spies, supplemented by the cross-examination of inhabitants, the German Intelligence Officers must have formed a fairly shrewd idea that a new army had been formed on the left of the Allied line.

Unfortunately for the Germans the 6th Army, instead of remaining on the outer flank of the British, was sent by General Joffre right back to Paris, and the Germans may therefore have been placed in some perplexity as to what had become of it. Two facts, however, they must have known—that it had been brought round by rail all the way from Alsace, and that it had taken post on the British left. The inference would have been natural that it was to take position again on the outer British flank—for it must be remembered that the Germans were probably convinced that the British Army was *in extremis* and that a protection to its exposed flank was necessary—and therefore that the 6th Army would eventually be found north or east of Paris. Such were the conclusions which the German Headquarters Staff could legitimately have drawn on the 31st August. But by the evening of the 3rd September there was four days' further information available. At that early stage in the campaign it is almost certain that Paris was swarming with German secret service agents, and it is reasonable to conclude that the invaders made every possible effort to locate the missing French army at this critical moment of their advance. The exact truth may possibly never be known, but it is

more than probable that by the evening of the 3rd September the Germans had fairly accurately located the position of the French 6th Army. In that case they would have realised that von Kluck was in a position of some danger, that he ought to close in at once towards his left so as to avoid isolation, and that he should give Paris as wide a berth as possible.

The manœuvre was an exceedingly delicate one, for it involved a flank march across an enemy within striking distance. Nevertheless the problem was not incapable of a reasonably safe solution. It might have been decided to accept the risk of isolation and to order General von Kluck cautiously to maintain his southerly advance until he felt the French 6th Army to his front. He could then have "contained" this while the remaining German armies forced a decision with the original Allied forces. As a matter of fact, had this plan been adopted, he might have pinned the French 6th Army within the perimeter of Paris and have prevented it taking the smallest part in the main action, in which the sorely tried British Army would then have been on the outer flank. Or, if it were considered essential that the German Ist Army should regain touch with the remainder of the line, the four other armies might have halted. General von Kluck could then have moved almost due east—or if necessary with a slight northerly detour—while the German IInd Army might have held out a helping hand until the operation was safely completed. Neither of these courses was, however, adopted. The Germans chose a third solution which involved a compromise, and, as is often the case with compromises in war, it was to prove fatal. The IInd, IIIrd, IVth, and Vth Armies were to continue the southward advance and General von Kluck was to gain his place in the line *simultaneously with this*

movement, a course of action which necessitated his marching south-east and involved the grave perils of a flank march while bringing him nearer and nearer to a position where the Allies could take advantage of it.

It was a grave risk, forced upon the Germans by an unfavourable situation and accepted by them in the hope that a great prize might be secured—the crushing of the Allied armies at the earliest possible moment. Had the war taken place but a few years earlier it is quite possible that the manœuvre—delicate though it was—might have succeeded; with the large cavalry forces at their disposal the Germans might have kept off reconnaissances sufficiently long for General von Kluck to have made his dash across to join hands with the IInd Army. But the introduction of aviation in the years immediately preceding the war had conferred enormous benefit upon the commander awaiting mistake on the part of his opponent as the opportunity to strike, and it was to this new development that the early discovery by the Allies of the risky manœuvre was due. Nor is it any derogation to the soldiership of General Joffre to say that his victory at the Marne was largely due to the errors of his antagonist. The French generalissimo had openly declared his policy of retiring until a favourable moment to strike should present itself. The favourable moment arrived, and the quickness with which General Joffre seized it and the skill with which he utilized it, stamp him as a master of the art of war. But in his most optimistic moments he probably never expected an opportunity such as was vouchsafed him by General von Kluck.

The Germans indeed seem to have been guilty of four blunders during the first days of September, 1914. In the first place General von Kluck was allowed to remain separated from the main body for at least a day too long.

In the second place, when it was determined to bring him in, the attempt was made to retrieve one blunder by another. Rather than delay their advance, the Germans called upon the commander of the Ist Army to close in on the march ; in other words, they were practically trying to concentrate within striking distance of an enemy strongly posted, a mistake which was to cost them dear and from the effects of which they were never fully to recover. The third blunder committed by the German Headquarters Staff was the failure, or the reluctance, to realize that the French 6th Army would be employed otherwise than in the mere defence of Paris. As mentioned above, it is more than probable that the whereabouts of the 6th Army during the first few days of September was no secret to German Headquarters. Even the fact of the 6th Army having been placed at the disposal of the Military Governor of Paris was known. With this information before them the German staff apparently came to the conclusion that the 6th Army would not be available for action in the field. The initiative displayed by General Gallieni in directing it against the flank of the German Ist Army, on his own responsibility, and without a moment's delay, seems to have come as a complete surprise. Added to these blunders was a fourth—the idea, which seems to have amounted to an obsession, that the British Army had been so roughly handled as to be incapable of any action, other than licking its wounds, for some time to come.

But the skill of the French commander-in-chief, in profiting by these blunders, would have availed little had it not been for the invincible determination of the armies he commanded. No praise can be too high for the grit and energy with which the subordinate generals, the regimental officers, and the rank and file of the French and British armies responded to the appeals addressed to

them on the 5th September. The nations whose soldiers stood at bay south of the Marne during those days of 1914, when the fate of all Europe hung in the balance, may well be proud of their sons. The tale of their prowess will live for ever in Western Europe. *Majus nascitur Iliade.*

CHAPTER XVII

OPERATIONS IN OTHER PORTIONS OF THE THEATRE OF WAR DURING THE BATTLE OF THE MARNE

Maps 2, 6, 4, 3, 8.

In order to secure a clear picture of the battle of the Marne, with which this volume is primarily concerned, the last eight chapters have dealt exclusively with the struggle in Central France, and no reference has been made to the events of the war which were happening at the time in other portions of the globe. A brief account of these operations is now required. It will deal so far as Europe is concerned with the fighting in Alsace-Lorraine, Belgium, East Prussia, Poland, Galicia, and Servia; with the operations at sea; and with the war in Africa, to which so far only a passing reference has been made. One of these sub-theatres—Alsace-Lorraine—is easily dealt with, for, apart from the great battle of Nancy which has already been described, no operations have to be recorded there, in the period under review, beyond the reoccupation of Lunéville by the French on September 11th. The first operations of any importance to be considered took place in Belgium.

Belgian sortie from Antwerp.—When the Belgian Army retired on Antwerp, after its gallant attempt to relieve the pressure on the Allied left at the time of the battle of Mons, King Albert is believed to have declared that it should not again take part in field operations on a large

scale, owing to the heavy losses it had sustained in the early fighting of the war. For the next fortnight, therefore, German Uhlans roamed at will over Western Belgium. But it was not long before the King of the Belgians realized that another opportunity had come for harrying the enemy. The situation in France induced the Germans to withdraw the IXth Reserve Corps, and at least one other division, from the neighbourhood of Antwerp and to replace them by a division of marines and a landwehr division. On September 6th General von Böhn, in command of the reinforcements making their way south, appeared at a town twelve miles south-east of Ghent and sent a force of some 5000 infantry with machine-guns to that city with a demand for large supplies of food. The fact that the supplies were to be delivered at different points on the roads leading southwards served to advertise the fact that large reinforcements were on their way to France and to indicate the route which these troops were taking. These facts came to the ears of the King. An immediate sortie in force from Antwerp was decided on, and on the 10th the decision was carried into effect, the Belgian Army issuing out on a wide front and driving back the German investing troops. Malines and Aerschot were quickly taken, and the Belgian troops blew up the railway between Louvain and Tirlemont. So successful was the sortie—at any rate for the time being—that on the 13th September the Belgian Government reported that practically the whole north-east of Belgium was clear of German troops.

But after four days' severe fighting in the triangle Brussels—Louvain—Malines the Belgians were forced to seek once again the shelter of the fortress. Their losses had been very great; in Antwerp alone there were 8000 wounded, and many had also been sent to Ghent, Bruges and other

places. But the German casualties were even higher. For some days it looked as if the invaders might have to evacuate Brussels, but this was avoided by recalling the south-bound reinforcements under General von Böhn. The Belgian military authorities calculated that nearly two whole corps had been diverted from the reinforcement of the German armies in France, so that even if the sortie was not crowned by complete tactical success for the Belgians it had at least achieved as much strategical success as could be hoped for from such an operation.

The Austro-Russian Campaign. Russian victories at Turobin and Rawaruska.—The story of the campaign between Austria and Russia has in a previous chapter been brought up to the battle of Lemberg, which city was entered by the Russians on the 3rd September. Immediately after that victory the situation was as follows :— The Russian 2nd and 3rd Armies had before them the demoralized remainder of the Austrian IInd Army of General Auffenberg in Galicia. The bulk of this army was in position about Grodek, on the railway between Przemysl and Lemberg, but portion of it had been driven northwards to Rawaruska ; there it united with the main body of the IIIrd Army which had hitherto been in second line. In Southern Poland General Dankl with his Ist Army had made successful progress towards the line Lublin—Chelm in spite of the resistance of the 1st Army of the Russians.

To take the latter sector of this portion of the theatre of war first. At the moment of the fall of Lemberg the advance of General Dankl had reached its high-water mark, for on the 3rd September his line stretched from Opole on the left to the north-west of Krasnostav, whence it curved towards Zamosc and Hrubieszow. The fall of Lemberg of course materially altered the situation not

only in Galicia but also in Southern Poland, and General Dankl was obviously in a position of some peril with two victorious Russian armies pressing on towards his base at Przemysl. Two courses lay open to him, one—the more obvious and commonplace—being to fall back at once and unite his army with that of General Auffenberg on the San, the other, and bolder, course being to ease the situation in Galicia by a resolute continuance of the offensive and to attack the Russian 1st Army before it could be reinforced. General Dankl had just received considerable reinforcements, for portion of the Austrian IIIrd Army of the Archduke Joseph Ferdinand had come into line upon his left, and German troops from Breslau had also been sent to him. This circumstance emboldened him to decide on continuing his offensive.

Unfortunately for General Dankl, the Russian higher command had only been awaiting a favourable issue at Lemberg to reinforce the right wing in Southern Poland, and that city once taken, reinforcements were hurried to the 1st Army. Large bodies of troops had been concentrated at Radom, west of the Vistula, two military bridges had been thrown across that river to facilitate the rapid reinforcement of the Russian right wing, and the Russian railways had been working at high pressure in this region of the war. Consequently, when the Austrian 1st Army advanced to the attack on the 4th September it experienced a resistance greater than had been expected. The attack collapsed, although the centre of the Russian 1st Army had to give way slightly. This withdrawal, however, placed the Russian 1st Army in a more favourable situation for effecting an envelopment. After waiting a couple of days for the arrival of all his reinforcements, General Ivanov, who now commanded the 1st Army, on the 6th September retorted with a counter-stroke which proved a

complete success. The Austrian left, commanded by the Archduke Joseph, was expelled from its position between Opole and Turobin on the 9th and was driven south-west in disorderly retreat towards Sandomir. The position of General Dankl now became distinctly precarious, and though he held on stubbornly on the line Turobin—Tomasov he was forced off this on the 10th September and was driven across the frontier.

His defeat had been accelerated by pressure on his right rear, for the Russian 2nd Army, leaving Lemberg, took Rawaruska in reverse, while the 3rd Army pinned the broken remnant of General Auffenberg's IInd Army to Grodek. Severe fighting developed, and on the 12th September terminated in complete disaster for the Austrian arms. The portions of the Austrian IInd and IIIrd Armies which were holding on to Rawaruska were attacked on three sides and gave way, leaving General Dankl completely in the air. The vanquished troops fled behind the San and took refuge under the guns of Przemysl. Nor did this complete the tale of Austrian misfortune. General Brussilov, the commander of the Russian 3rd Army, had split up his force into three columns, and it was his centre and right which had been operating against Grodek. His left wing seized Mikolaiev on the 4th September, taking forty guns, and within the next ten days occupied Stryj and Czernowitz, the capital of Bukowina. By the 12th September the Austrian armies had paid the penalty for incorrect conclusions and for faulty strategy. The Austrian General Staff had gambled on the slowness of the Russian mobilization and had advanced on a rather hazardous campaign, the danger of which had not been realized owing to the ease with which the Ist Army had advanced towards Lublin and Chelm. The strategy was open to criticism, for the Ist and

IInd Armies had been moving on divergent lines, with the result that success tended to separate them still further and to make mutual support impossible.

The Russians evacuate East Prussia.—After the crushing defeat at Tannenberg, the fugitives of General Samsonov's southern column retired by Johannisburg and Lyck towards the frontier to seek shelter behind the fortresses of Ostrolenka, Lomza, and Ossowiec. Detaching the Ist Corps to deal with the remainder of General Samsonov's army, General von Hindenburg moved the bulk of his forces by the Allenstein—Insterburg railway to deal with the northern column under General Rennenkampf. That commander, however, had received early news of the disaster at Tannenberg, and immediately renouncing all idea of laying siege to Königsberg, he retreated as rapidly as possible towards the Niemen. He had got clear of Insterburg before the leading columns of General von Hindenburg were within striking distance, but on the former battlefield of Gumbinnen he was compelled to fight a rear-guard action with the left wing of the Germans. Successfully beating off the attack he continued his retirement towards the east, followed up by the enemy who advanced towards the line Lyck—Wirballen. The exact chronology of the next few days is somewhat obscure, but, by the 15th, the German commander had possessed himself of the towns of Suwalki and Augustwo. It will be sufficient to record that by the 12th September—the date on which this volume closes—General Rennenkampf, avoiding disaster, had regained Russian territory and was in full retreat towards the Niemen.

The invasion of East Prussia had therefore failed. It had led to the hurried retreat of one column and had involved the other in overwhelming disaster. Nevertheless it would be idle to judge the Russian effort by the mere

touchstone of victory or defeat. The invasion had come at a moment when the fortunes of the Allies were at the lowest ebb, and its initial success had exercised a profound influence on the general situation. The fact that it had taken place at all, had proved the unsoundness of the calculations of the German General Staff as to the speed with which Russia could mobilize. That the territories owned by the Prussian aristocracy had been overrun produced an effect quite disproportionate to the military value of the invasion.

After nearly a month's fighting the Russians had been forced to yield up the terrain they had won at the expense of some 100,000 casualties. But the sacrifice had not been in vain, for from the end of August large German reinforcements, earmarked for the Western Front, had been diverted to the east, and whole corps had apparently been withdrawn even from France and Belgium at the very moment when the great issue was about to be engaged on the Marne. The moral effect produced in Germany by the brief invasion can be gauged by the frenzy of joy which burst out after the battle of Tannenberg and the consequent retirement of General Rennenkampf. General von Hindenburg was acclaimed as the greatest soldier of the day and saluted as the Arminius of the twentieth century. The Emperor raised him to the rank of Field-Marshal and made him generalissimo of the German armies in the east. The relief experienced by that commander's brilliant victory blotted out the disquieting intelligence of the disaster about the same time to the Austrians in Eastern Galicia, and that catastrophe indeed served but to throw up in more prominent relief the apparent invincibility of the Prussian arms. It was about September 3rd that the star of Prussia had reached its zenith. On that date the invasion of

the eastern domain had been definitely crushed, and German armies were almost at the gates of Paris—the goal which, in popular estimation, was to be reached. This combination of successes was sufficient to intoxicate the inhabitants of the German Empire with dreams of a speedy triumph and to inflame them with visions of world conquest But much water—and blood—was to flow under the bridges of the Marne in the week which followed.

The Servian Campaign.—In spite of the declaration of Austria after the battle of the Iadar that the Servian campaign was of but secondary importance, she was soon preparing for another invasion. Some modification was made in her order of battle in this region, for portions of the regular troops had been transferred to Galicia and their places taken by landwehr and landsturm troops. On the 7th September, all was ready for the second invasion. Two corps were told off to make a demonstration between Mitrovitza and Bielina, while the main effort was to be directed against the Servian left with the object of pushing on rapidly to Valievo and thus cutting off the Servian retreat. The demonstration on the Austrian left was a failure. But south-east of Zvornik the Austrian masses, composed of *troupes d'élite*, succeeded on September 7th in installing themselves on the right bank of the Drina. A desultory and indecisive struggle followed which led to no useful result, and the general effect of the campaign was merely to retain five Austrian corps in Bosnia and along the Danube and Save, at a time when every available soldier was required in the duel with Russia.

Naval operations.—After the naval action in the Bight of Heligoland, the activities of the German submarines began to assert themselves, and the mines which had been scattered broadcast began to exact their toll. On Sep-

tember the 3rd the gunboat *Speedy* was escorting a company of mine-sweepers thirty miles off our east coast when one of the latter craft struck a mine and went down, and a quarter of an hour later the *Speedy* herself came to a similar end. Two days later the light cruiser *Pathfinder* when on patrol duty in the approaches to the Firth of Forth was torpedoed by a German submarine, and went to the bottom in an incredibly short space of time with the loss of almost all hands. The next victim of submarine warfare was the old German light cruiser *Hela*. The British submarines had taken post off the German coast within a few hours of the opening of the war; but owing to the reluctance of the German vessels to leave harbour, their opportunities were very limited. In the small hours of the morning of the 13th September, however, the *Hela* was sighted by two British submarines, one of which—the E9—got in a torpedo and gained the honour of making the first successful submarine attack on a German vessel in the war. These incidents account for the naval operations in the North Sea during the first twelve days of September, but one other occurrence has to be related. On September 8th the auxiliary cruiser *Oceanic* was wrecked near the north coast of Scotland and became a total loss. This vessel had been taken over from the White Star Line and was the first auxiliary cruiser to be lost in the war.

In the Baltic there were no naval operations, and several weeks after the 12th September the Russian Admiralty was able to announce that no Russian ship-of-war had been lost or damaged. But in the Atlantic there was some activity, the German auxiliary cruiser *Bethania* being captured, while a similar, but smaller, vessel—the *Spreewald*—was taken by the British cruiser *Berwick*. At the same time two colliers supplying the German raiders in

the Atlantic were seized with 6000 tons of coal. In the Mebiterranean the Franco-British Fleet began to establish itself in the Adriatic early in September and, by occupying islands, to work its way up gradually to Pola, the chief Austrian naval base. Further afield the German light cruiser *Emden*, which was to gain world-wide notoriety before she met her end, turned up in the Bay of Bengal on the 10th September, after being lost sight of since the war began. Within a few days she took and sank some half-dozen British merchantmen to the value of nearly £250,000 sterling.

In the Pacific the Allies had the advantage, although the German cruiser *Nürnberg* destroyed a British cable station on Fanning Island on September 7th. This was, however, compensated for on September 11th when the German town of Herbertshöhe in New Pommern Island, the largest of the Bismarck archipelago, was occupied after a smart fight by an Australian Naval Brigade. Herbertshöhe was the seat of government of Germany's possessions in these waters, so that its capture had a decisive rather than a local effect, and little further opposition was offered to the destruction of German wireless stations in the Pacific. At Tsing-tao the blockade imposed by the Japanese had begun on the 27th August. Japanese troops landed on September 2nd, but for a time the campaign stood still. The Japanese Fleet maintained a spasmodic bombardment of the forts and harbour, but the torrential rains made the swollen streams impassable and forbade movement by land. The German Pacific Squadron had wisely sheered off from Tsing-tao early in August. One of the ships composing it, the *Emden*, had been detached for commerce raiding in the Indian Ocean, while the fast light cruiser *Karlsruhe* was sent on a similar mission to the South Atlantic.

There were then left with Admiral von Spee two cruisers and three light cruisers, all of considerable speed, which sailed on a commerce-destroying voyage to the western coast of South America. To deal with this fleet a small British squadron left England early in August consisting of the old battleship *Canopus*, the cruisers *Good Hope* and *Monmouth*, the light cruiser *Glasgow*, and the armed liner *Otranto*.

Apart from actual naval operations, the period of the 1st–12th September was marked by the creation of a new naval force in England. On September 7th, the First Lord of the Admiralty announced the formation of a Royal Naval Division, to be composed of surplus men from the Royal Marines, Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, Royal Fleet Reserve, and Royal Naval Reserve, augmented to a strength of approximately 15,000 men from the New Armies. The seamen and marines were available "after providing for all present and foreseeable future needs of the fleets at sea," and the Division was to be organized and trained under the Admiralty for service afloat or ashore as required. The Division was originally formed of three brigades, two naval and one marine. The last-named had already been employed on active service at Ostend, where it was landed in the last week of August for the occupation of the town and surrounding district.[1]

The War in Africa.—So soon as Germany showed that she was prepared to allow command of the sea to go by default, it was inevitable that Africa should be the scene of military operations, for it was in that continent that Germany had staked out her largest claims for colonial expansion. In the early eighties of the nineteenth century she had thrust herself forward as the *Græculus esuriens* in the scramble for Africa, and had come off with a fair

[1] See p. 78.

share of spoil. Beginning from the west, Germany's first colony at the outbreak of the war was Togoland, a thriving colony about the size of Ireland; and further south, between British Nigeria and French Congo, were the German Cameroons,[1] a colony larger than the whole German Empire in Europe. Even more extensive was German South-West Africa, furnished with a system of strategic railways. On the other coast lay German East Africa, the largest and most valuable of all the German colonies, in size about twice that of European Germany and containing a population of some eight millions, of whom about 5000 were white men.

Togoland was the first colony to be taken in hand, and its situation shut in between French and British territory, with a coast-line vulnerable to attack from the sea, greatly facilitated the operations against it. By the 10th August the southern portion had been wrested from Germany, and by the end of the month the whole colony was in the possession of French and British forces. The Cameroons, however, gave more trouble, and by the 12th September three small British expeditions which had penetrated a short distance into the country had been driven back across the frontier with some loss. In South-West Africa the Germans, immediately on the declaration of war, abandoned their two principal stations on the coast and retired to the inland capital of Windhoek, and by the 20th August they had made several small incursions across the frontier into British territory. Owing to the fact that South-West Africa marched with the self-governing dominion of the newly-constituted Union of South Africa, it was decided to leave the subjugation of the German colony to the latter, and on September 8th the Premier of South Africa announced that his Government had decided

[1] Shown as Kamerun on Map 8.

to carry war into German territory "in the interests of South Africa as well as of the Empire." At that time scattered fighting was taking place along the Orange River where it formed the frontier between Cape Colony and South-West Africa.

Theoretically German East Africa seemed an easy prey for England, for it was ringed round by British, Allied, and neutral territories, while command of the sea was indisputably in the hands of England, who possessed an excellent base in Zanzibar oppos te the centre of the coast-line of the colony. In the first week of the war the British light cruisers *Astræa* and *Pegasus* bombarded the German port of Dar-es-salaam, when the wireless station was destroyed, a gunboat sunk, and three mail-boats, a large floating dock and several smaller craft were taken as prizes of war. This event, however, did not deter the German administration of the colony and several attacks were made on the Rhodesian frontier, where, however, the British held their own. More serious were the operations which the Germans carried out against the Uganda railway, the main artery for traffic through British East Africa and inconveniently situated close to the northern boundary of the German colony. The British forces available, consisting of two weak battalions of the King's African Rifles (native troops with British officers) and a handful of white volunteers, were outnumbered by the German-led forces, and although some small reinforcements arrived from India on September 3rd, they were insufficient to do more than hold the Germans in check, and all idea of a British offensive through the enemy's territory had to be put aside for the time.

Conclusion.—After six weeks of war, waged with an intensity hitherto unknown, the outstanding feature was

the failure of the German plan of campaign. That plan had aimed at securing a rapid decision in France with the bulk of the German armies, and the subsequent and immediate prosecution of a second campaign against the more slowly mobilizing strength of Russia. But on the 12th September the Germans had definitely acknowledged defeat upon the Western Front, while in the east the situation had been so precarious as to evoke an ecstasy of jubilation over the fact that a Russian invasion had been averted.

As invariably happened in the earlier stages of the war, erroneous conclusions were at once drawn by the side which had secured the temporary advantage, and none was of greater persistence than that the war could not last more than six months in all. In England the authority most competent to express an opinion had laid his plans for a three-year struggle. But to the great mass of people the contemplation of such a protracted period seemed to augur the admission of a factor of safety in excess of what was required. The very number and magnitude of the battles fought had begun to create a sense of optimism. Since the middle of August Morhange, Liége, Neufchâteau, Charleroi, Mons, Le Cateau, Tannenberg, Lemberg, Torobin, and the Marne had been fought and won, and it seemed that no nation or group of nations could stand the continuance of a strain implied by ten great battles in half as many weeks, even if European finance could endure the drain upon it—a question to which experts were unanimous in giving a negative, and totally incorrect, reply.

Nor was the man-power of Europe inexhaustible. Although it was not easy to secure an accurate total of the casualties suffered, the official *communiqués* published at Berlin and Vienna on the 12th and 16th

September, 1914, which showed the number of prisoners taken by the Central Powers as amounting at the latter date to over 300,000, gave some idea of the diminution of personnel in killed, wounded, and missing which must have taken place since the war began. These facts not unnaturally led to some scepticism as to the possibility of a protracted war, and although the struggle in Manchuria had clearly foreshadowed the intrusion of siege operations into field warfare and consequent retardation in enforcing a decision, this factor was lost sight of, if, indeed, it had ever been clearly grasped. That the war lasted longer than was at first, and universally, expected is now a matter of history, and the factors which led to its continuance far over the period popularly believed to be the maximum possible will doubtless occupy the expert investigation of every War Office in Europe for a generation to come. The task of arriving at a just conclusion on such a matter is outside the scope of this volume. All that need here be said is that when nations are battling for what they believe to be their existence they are prepared to fight to the last man and the last shilling—and that men and shillings last longer than was formerly thought possible.

Of the real causes of the war little has so far been said. The first page of this book told of the murder of the Archduke, and before the initial chapter was completed eight nations were at war and Armageddon had arrived. Posterity will seek a solution as to how an incident so insignificant gave rise to a world-wide struggle. The question will be put to Caspars now in their cradles by Peterkins yet unborn. But this much is certain—it was Germany who drew the sword. Almost every day it becomes clearer that she entered upon the war in obedience to no blind impulse. Her plans were carefully prepared and she had

taken every precaution to assure success. In a succeeding volume it is hoped to include an enquiry into the reasons which induced her to turn a deaf ear to all discussion and led her to turn Europe into a shambles.

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The Mayflower Press, Plymouth, England.
William Brendon & Son, Ltd.

THE SITUATION IN EUROPE AT MIDNIGHT OF THE 4th-5th AUGUST 1914.

Map 1.

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SKETCH MAP OF THE WESTERN FRONT, NORTH OF ALSACE.

Map 2

Scale 1 : 1,000,000
(16 miles = 1 inch)
0 5 10 15 20 25 30

ANTWERP
25th Aug. 1914
Ostend
BRUGES
GHENT
Malines
Aerschot
Diest
Termonde
Alost
Louvain
Haelen
Hasselt
HOLLAND
COLOGNE
DUNKIRK
CALAIS
Ypres
Courtrai
MAASTRICHT
BRUSSELS
Tirlemont
Tongres
AIX-LA-CHAPELLE
BONN
Boulogne
St.Omer
B E L G I U M
Hal
Wavre
LIÉGE
Armentières
Lys
French Territorials Assembling
LILLE
French Territorial Brigade
Tournai
Ath
1st Army
Soignies
Nivelles
Perwez
Eghezee
Gembloux
Huy
Béthune
La Bassée
Mons
Charleroi
IInd Army
British
Conde
Binche
NAMUR
IIIrd Army
Malmédy
St.Pol
Lens
Douai
Valenciennes
Bry
Bavai
Jerlain
Maubeuge
Thuin
Fosses
Dinant
Arras
le Quesnoy
1st Cavalry Corps
5th Army
Abbeville
Doullens
Cambrai
Caudry
le Gateau
Marcoing
Avesnes
Landrecies
Bapaume
French Territorials
IInd Army
GIVET
Albert
Combles
Wassigny
Nouvion
Chimay
Péronne
Oriigny
Ste Benoite
Guise
Etréaupont
Hirson
IIIrd Army
IVth Army
Paliseul
French Territorials & portion of 6th Army
AMIENS
Vermand
St. Quentin
Ribemont
Sains
Vervins
Rumigny
Neufchâteau
Chaulnes
1st Cavalry Corps
Roye
Portion of 6th Army
Ham
Moy
5th Army
MÉZIÈRES
Signy
Donchery
Sedan
4th Army
Tintigny
Arlon
Tréves
TO COBLENTZ 60 MILES
Montdidier
Chauny
La Fère
Rozoy
Novion Porcien
Laon
9th Army
Rethel
Montmédy
Virton
LUXEMBURG
Longwy
Lassigny
Noyon
British
Attigny
Craonne
Beauvais
Compiegne
Soissons
F R A N C E
RHEIMS
Nery
Creil
Villers-Cotterêts
Crépy-en-Valois
Senlis
Nanteuil
Beaumont
Pontoise
Louvres
Dammartin
6th Army
IVth Reg. Corps
1st Cavalry Corps
May-en-Multien
Lizy
Meaux
St.Denis
Claye
Changis
Château Thierry
Dormans
Epernay
Avize
Châlons
Montmirail
IInd Army of IIIrd Army
IVth Army
Revigny
3rd Army
Bar-le-Duc
Commercy
Sermaize
Vitry-le-François
4th Army
Versailles
PARIS
1st Cavalry Corps
8th Div. from 4th Army (detraining)
Coulommiers
la Ferté-Gaucher
Esternay
Fère Champenoise
Sézanne
Sompuis
Camp de Mailly
9th Cav. Div.
Rozoy
Courtaçon
2nd Cavalry Corps
5th Army
9th Army
British
Corbeil
Melun
Aube
Seine
Marne
Ourcq
Vesle
Aisne
Ste.Ménehould
Forest of Argonne
Radius of action of entrenched camp
VERDUN
Montfaucon
Varennes
Dun
Briey
Etain
Conflans
Eparges
Souilly
Clermont
Ft. Troyon
METZ
Thionville
Longuyon
Pont-à-Mousson
St Mihiel
St.Geneviève
2nd
Morhange
Château Salins
Vic
Dieuze
Moyenvic
Amance
Chambenoux
Cercueil
Dombasle
Lunéville
Saarburg
Fort Manonviller
TOUL
NANCY
Moselle
Saffais
Gerbéviller
Meuse
Woevre
LORRAINE

Situation on 23rd August, 1914 — French, British, Belgian, Germans
Situation on 29th August, 1914 — Franco-British Forces thus, Germans
Situation on 5th September, 1914 — French, British, Germans

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MAP TO ILLUSTRATE THE BRITISH & GERMAN NAVAL BASES IN THE NORTH SEA. Map 3.

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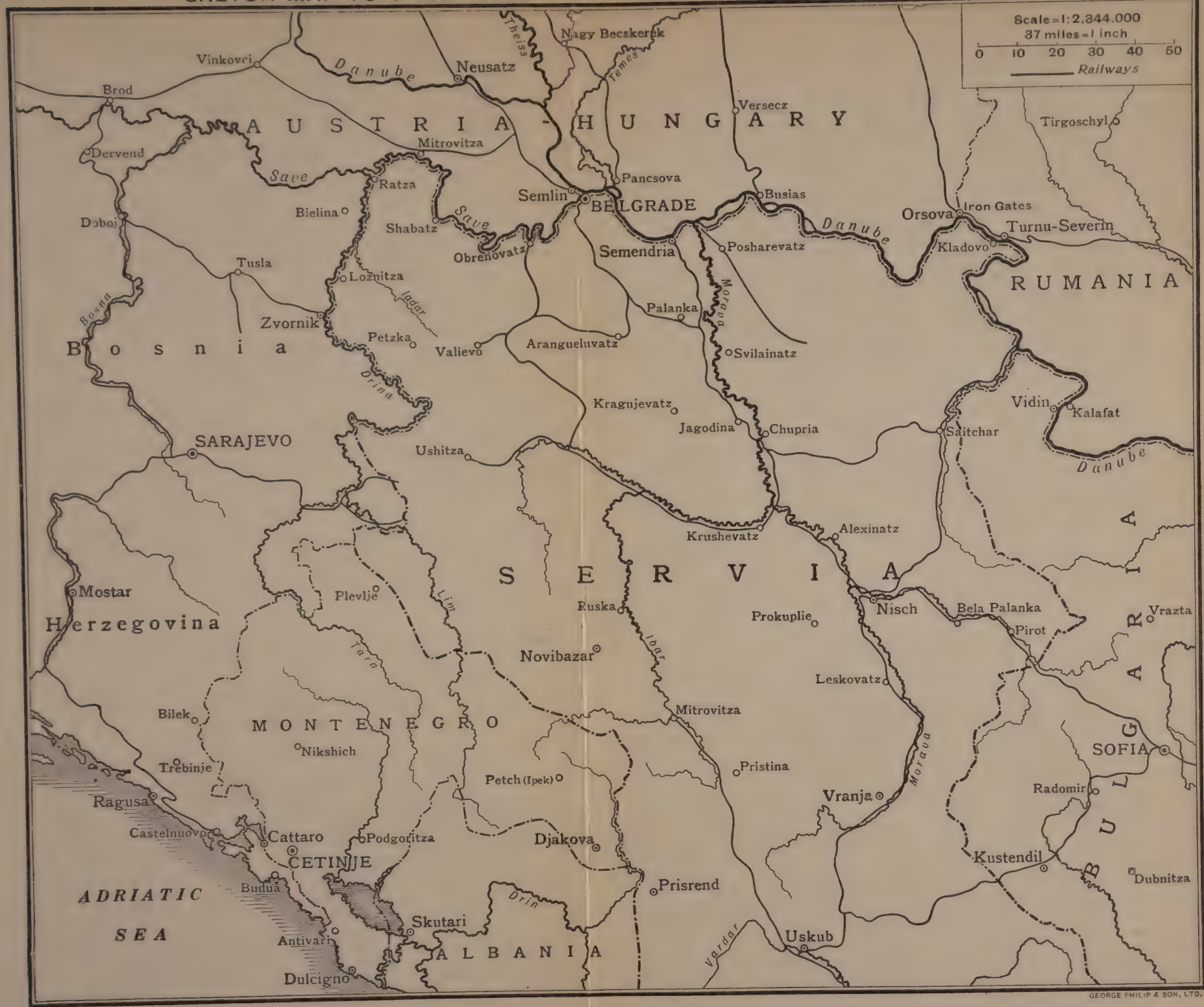

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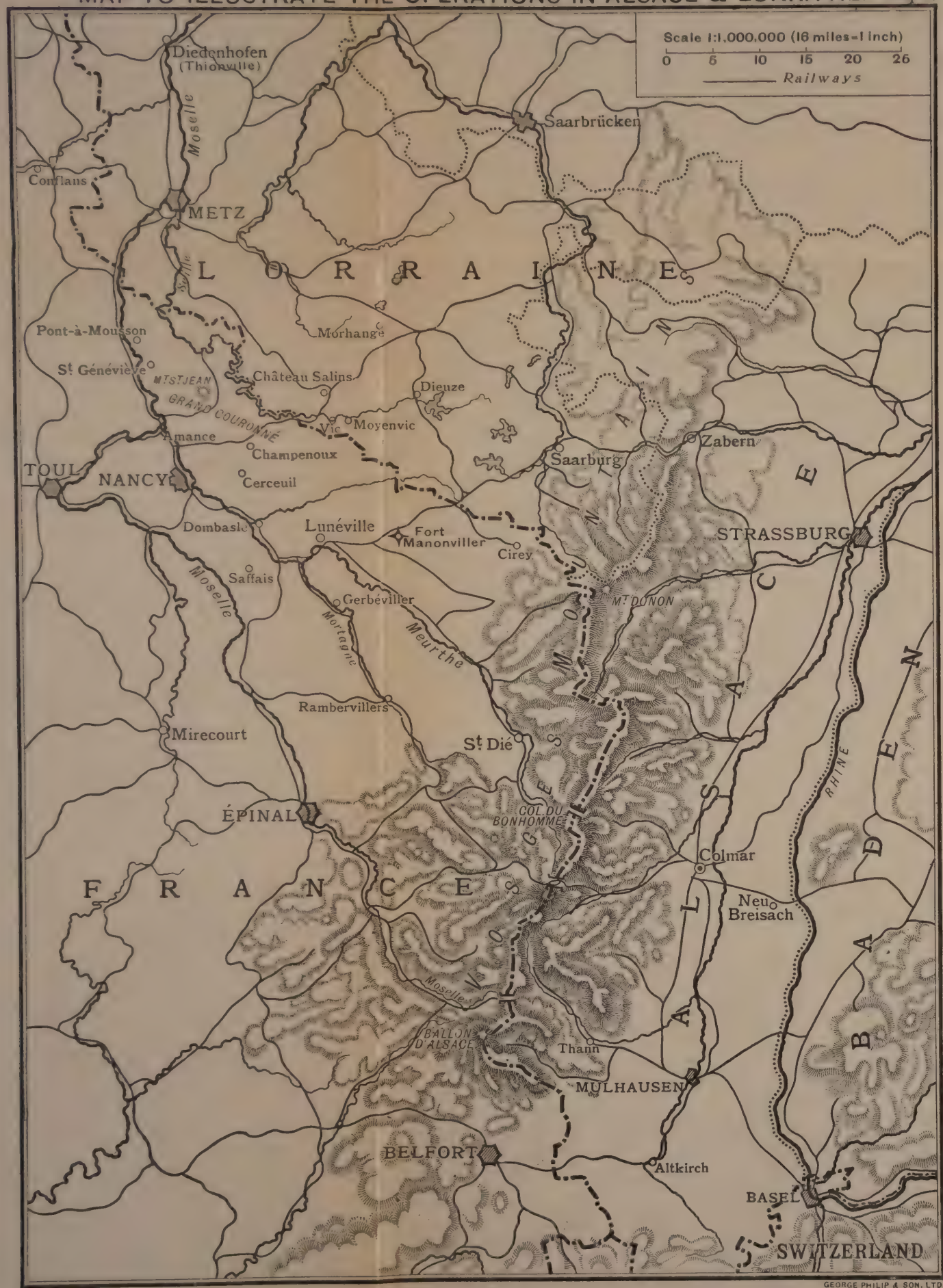

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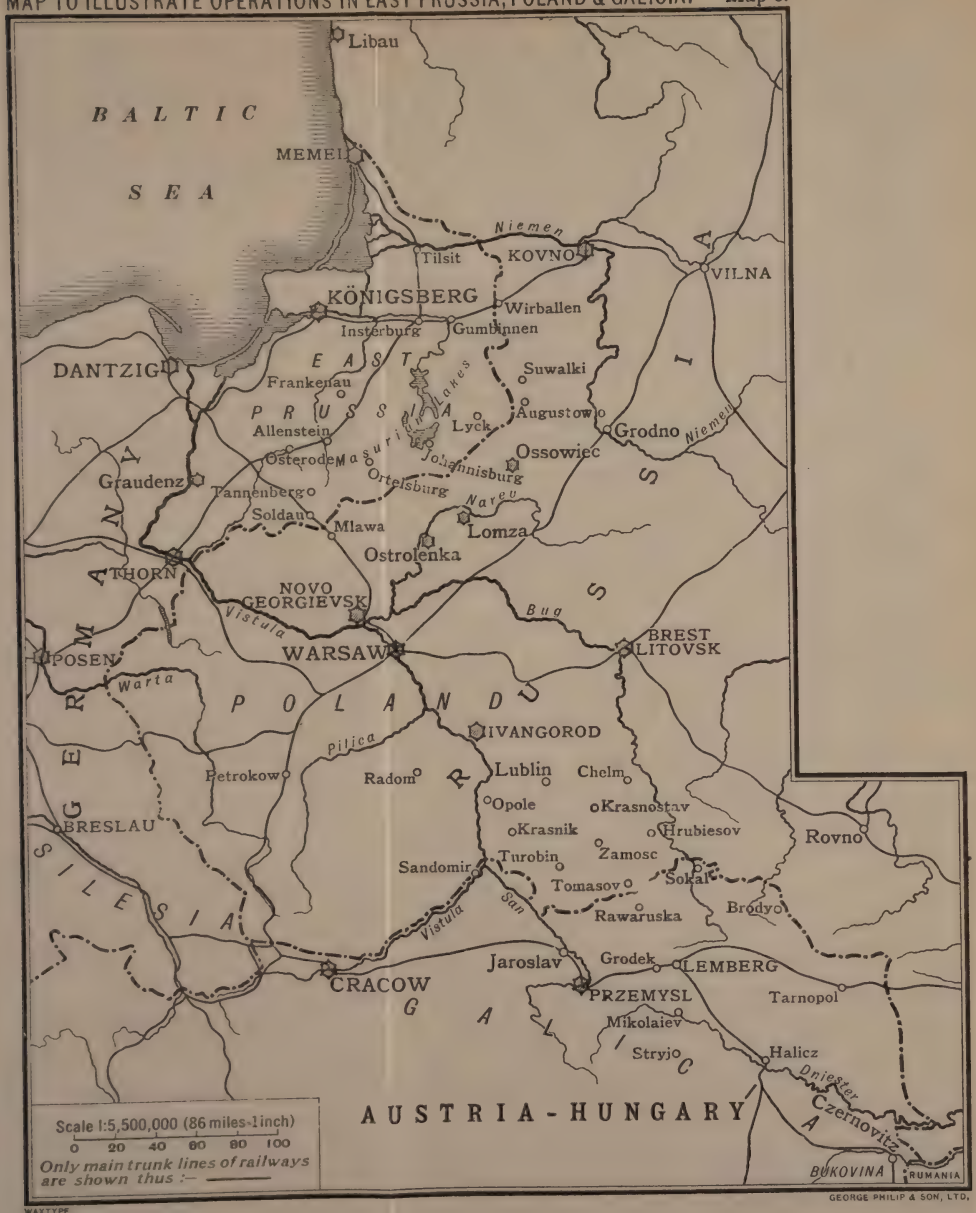

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